

The Jane Austen Society



Report for 2009

The Jane Austen Society

Founded in 1940 by Miss Dorothy Darnell

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www.janeaustensociety.org.uk

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Copies of the Constitution of the Society may be obtained from the website, or by application to the Secretary.

Front cover: John Austen III, English School, late 17th century (The Jane Austen Society, on display at Jane Austen's House). See p. 5.

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Report for 2009

As was indicated last year, it is now our intention to publish lectures given at the Society's conferences in the *Report*. This volume includes papers from the conference held at the University of Kent, two of which make available the results of detailed research into the Austen family's origins in the county: one is a survey of the records held in the Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone, by Mark Ballard and Alison Cresswell, who are archivists there; the other, by Clare Graham, gives an account of the history of the Austens in Kent. Both provide invaluable biographical and genealogical information.

Among the various informative and enjoyable articles by many of our regular contributors, covering a wide range of literary, biographical and historical matters, Clive Caplan completes his comprehensive account of the ships in which the Austen sailor brothers served by turning his attention to Admiral Charles; and two extremely important pieces of primary research material are made available for the first time by Deirdre Le Faye, in transcriptions of two sets of manuscripts: one is Catherine Hubback's Memoir of her father, Admiral Francis Austen; the other is a corrected text of the letters of Mr and Mrs Austen previously published only in very inaccurate versions in R. A. Austen-Leigh's *Austen Papers*.

There are also the important annual listings of the publication of Jane Austen studies and the appearance of books and other materials in the salerooms; and, as always, the concluding article is the Address given at the Society's AGM at Chawton, this year by the journalist and former parliamentarian Matthew Parris.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Saturday 18 July 2009

at Chawton House, Hampshire

(by courtesy of Chawton House Library)

1. **The President**, Richard Knight, welcomed members to the meeting.
2. **Apologies** had been received from Rachel Field and Jill Williams.
3. **Minutes** of the AGM 2008 were approved by the meeting.
4. **Officers' Reports**

The Chairman, Patrick Stokes, on behalf of the Trustees of the Society, had pleasure in presenting his Report for the period since the AGM in 2008 to the current date, giving the members an update on the activities within the Society, and confirming that the Society had continued to fulfil its objectives as the membership would have wished.

He paid tribute to the work of the Committee Members/Trustees, who were all volunteers, and thanked them for their devoted and tireless work. He asked those present to stand up and identify themselves to the membership. The 5-yearly election of Committee Members was due in 2009. Four committee members, Jill Williams, Kathryn Sutherland, Catharine Freeman and he, had stepped down, and three new members had joined. The total number of the incoming committee members did not exceed the number of positions available, nor had there been more than one nomination for each position. There had, therefore, been no competitive process and the membership was asked to confirm the new committee. The new officers would be David Selwyn, who would take over as the Chairman, with Elizabeth Proudman as Vice-Chairman; Bruce Johnstone would be the new Treasurer while Maureen Stiller remained as Secretary. The other new members of the committee were Sharon Bassett from Scottish Branch and Anthony Finney from the London Group. The Society's five Vice-Presidents continued to provide occasional advice on Society matters and he paid particular tribute to Elizabeth Jenkins, who would be celebrating her 104th birthday in October.

He thanked everyone who had made the effort to attend the AGM and, in particular, those who had come from overseas, including a party of 41 JASNA members who would be attending the afternoon session. He paid particular tribute to the JASNA membership who showed continuing generosity in raising funds for a variety of Jane Austen-related projects in the UK which, last year, amounted to more than \$12,000.

It was with great sadness and regret that he announced the death, in October 2008, of Jean Freeman. She had been a staunch supporter of the Society over several decades, having not missed an AGM since 1957, and her book *Jane Austen in Bath* was the top-selling Society publication. Her contribution to Jane Austen activities was much appreciated and admired, and the Society extended condolences to all her family.

The Society's Committee had met three times during the last year, in line with past practice, but had been unable to use the Granary at Jane Austen's House Museum for meetings because of the building works. However, Chawton House Library had generously allowed the Committee to use various rooms round the House for that period. The Branches and Groups had continued to prosper, and the annual meeting between their representatives and the main Committee had been held in February 2009.

He thanked the Membership Secretary, Rosemary Culley, for her major contribution to the Society's work and, on her behalf, asked members to bring themselves up-to-date with the subscription changes that had been made during the year, since several members had not updated their payment process.

He thanked Committee members for their work during the year: Dr Brian Joice, who managed the Society's website, keeping both members and non-members abreast of events around the Society; David Selwyn, as the Society's Vice-Chairman and Editor of Society publications, for his excellent work in editing both the *Newsletter* and the *Annual Report*; Maureen Stiller, for her

continuing able work as Secretary of the Society; Jill Williams, as Treasurer, for her challenging work in getting to grips with the complexity of charities' legislation; Fiona Ainsworth for her excellent job as Branches Secretary; and Lesley Wilson for her hard work in managing the publishing and printing of Society publications. Lastly, he thanked the Society's President, Richard Knight, who continued to oversee the Committee's efforts in his uniquely positive, helpful and supportive style. The Society was also grateful to him for his family's connection with Chawton House and the Library Trustees, which had made it possible to continue to hold the Annual General Meeting in the House's beautiful grounds. This would be the 54th AGM to be held on the lawns.

If members had had time to analyse the Society's accounts, published in the *Annual Report*, they would be aware that the Society's finances were in reasonable shape. The increase in subscriptions implemented at the beginning of 2009 had been helpful in restoring the balance between income and expenditure, provided that members updated their payment process. The principal activities – running the AGM and publishing books, two *Newsletters* each year and the *Annual Report* – had become ever more expensive.

In September 2008, the Society had organised a conference in Lichfield under the title of 'Jane Austen and Dr Johnson'. Highlights of the programme included a visit to the Revd Edward Cooper's parish at Hamstall Ridware, attendance at evensong in Lichfield Cathedral, and a fascinating talk by Professor David Nokes, on 'Jane Austen and Dr Johnson'. In September 2009, a 2/3 day conference would be held in Canterbury, Kent, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the first Kent conference organised at Wye by Alwyn Austen. In May 2010, a conference would be held in Bermuda, again to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the first conference held there in 2000. The lecture team at the conference would be headed by Professor Janet Todd of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, supported by Professor Alastair Duckworth, Sheila Kindred, Dr Edward Harris and Suzanne Notman.

The annual Study Day, previously held in conjunction with London University, would be held in 2009 in Cambridge on 14 November, but might return to London in 2010. The speakers at the Study Day would be Professor Richard Jenkins, Dorothy McMillan, Karen O'Brien and Jane Stabler, with Professor Janet Todd in the Chair.

He then gave a brief description of projects around the country: in Tonbridge, Kent, the Kent Branch was working in conjunction with the parish of St Peter and St Paul, arranging an audio tour around the Jane Austen-associated monuments in the church, and a walk around Jane Austen-associated buildings in Tonbridge. A display case in the church would have, amongst other items, copies of manuscripts and an early Tunbridge ware box. Funding for the project had been contributed by the Kent Branch, the Jane Austen Society and JASNA. Deirdre Le Faye would also be involved, as would Margaret Wilson, who had written *Jane Austen's family and Tonbridge*. In Lyme Regis, the coastal cliff had now been temporarily stabilised but, in the process, the Jane Austen Garden had suffered the loss of its flowers and bench. The Society's plaque was also in a deplorable state. However,

a team was now working to restore it to a desirable state and he thanked Maggie Lane for bringing this to his attention.

In Chawton, the Bells Appeal had successfully achieved the objective of restoring two bells from 1421 and 1621 (which Jane Austen would have heard) and of replacing the 1884 acoustically unsatisfactory bells with six new ones. The Bishop of Winchester, the Right Reverend Michael Scott-Joynt, would consecrate the bells during Evensong, at the conclusion of the AGM. In Steventon, the survey of the foundations of Jane Austen's former home had now attracted the interest of English Heritage, which was making funds available for further surveys in the longer term.

On behalf of the Society, the Chairman expressed gratitude to the Executors of Amyas Austen (brother of Alwyn and Francis) for their donation of the portraits of John Austen III and his daughter Jane, who was married to Stephen Stringer. John Austen III was Jane Austen's great-great-grandfather, and these were the oldest known Austen family portraits; the Society had arranged to lend them to Jane Austen's House Museum.

2009 marked the Diamond Jubilee of the opening of the Museum on 23 July 1949. To mark this, the Museum Trustees had completed the physical structure stages of their Museum Development Plan, in order to meet the needs of current visitors (upwards of 35,000 a year) and future visitors, and a formal opening had been held on 4 July. The entrance to the Museum would now be through the courtyard into the refurbished former Granary, where all the retail facilities were now located. There was also a 6-minute film, narrated by the Museum's patron, Elizabeth Garvie, about the Museum, and Jane Austen's life and writing. Across the courtyard, the Austens' kitchen had been restored to period style. A new building behind, and sympathetic in style to, the bakehouse, housed a Learning Centre, with extra provision for education and interpretation. The Society extended grateful thanks to Mike Cashman, the Project Manager and designer, Louise West, the Education Manager, and Anne Channon, the House Manager, all of whom had worked exceptionally hard with the Museum staff and volunteers to achieve the opening of all the facilities to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the Austen ladies' move to Chawton on 7 July 1809. The overall cost of the project had been £670,000, of which 80% had been generously provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with £100,000 being contributed by the Trustees of the late Penelope Dore (a friend of the Carpenter family), and £30,000 from the Jane Austen Memorial Trust reserves. The Society had donated £5000 to provide new chairs for the Learning Centre. Finally, the Chairman called for a round of applause for Tom Carpenter, who had been the key reason for the success of the project.

Chawton House Library had opened its doors especially for the 2009 AGM, and members were welcome to visit it during the lunch hour. The Library would also be open to visitors on Heritage Day, 10 September 2009. The House ran an annual short story competition to encourage contemporary creative writing, which had been won, in 2009, by Victoria Owens; the runner-up was Elsa Solender, former President of JASNA.

Finally, as this was the last year in which he would be Chairman, he thanked everyone for their support during his five-year tenure, particularly the Committee members, and wished the incoming Committee every success during the next five years. He would, however, continue to organise Society events.

The President thanked the Chairman for his Report and for all the work that he had tirelessly undertaken on behalf of the Society: chairing the Committee meetings; sitting on sub-Committees; organising the annual conference and AGM; and working as a Trustee of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust, which managed Jane Austen's House.

The Honorary Secretary, Maureen Stiller, advised that the membership figures for the year ended 30 June 2009 stood at 1725. This figure took account of the 83 members who had joined during the year, 68 who had not renewed their membership, 28 who had resigned, mostly because of age or infirmity, 12 who had died and 11 whose post had been returned. She reminded members once again that if they had moved, or were moving, house, they should notify the Membership Secretary, Rosemary Culley, and ensure that if they were paying by banker's order or similar, they ask their bank to include their full membership number in the payment. Rosemary also needed to be advised if members changed their Bank.

The Honorary Treasurer, Jill Williams, had been unable to attend the meeting and, on her behalf, the Chairman presented her Report. The accounting for the year 2008 was much the same as usual, and interest rates had not been too much affected because the financial crisis had not occurred until later in the year. Up-to-date Gift Aid claims had been submitted to the Inland Revenue; married couples renewing their subscription were reminded to ensure that it was the same person who completed the Gift Aid form, their subscription to the Society, and the cheque, or this caused difficulty in claiming Gift Aid. She had asked that the membership be advised that there were no current plans to change the bank accounts.

Finally, as this was the last year in which she would be Treasurer, she thanked the Branch Treasurers and Membership Secretaries for their help and support, with very special thanks to Patrick Stokes and Rosemary Culley for their assistance in the accounting process.

5. Any Other Business

- 5.1 David Selwyn, on behalf of the Committee members and the membership, paid tribute to the retiring Chairman and Treasurer for their hard work in the preceding five years, and to the other retiring members.
- 5.2 Maureen Kelly, Scottish Branch, reiterated the Chairman's thanks to Tom Carpenter and all at Jane Austen's House Museum. She emphasised that the development had in no way detracted from the essential homely feel of the house.

- 5.3 The Chairman, in reply to a query from Hazel Mills, Cambridge Branch, said that, at some stage, he would be attempting to make a replica of Jane Austen's writing desk.
- 5.4 Further to the Chairman's report on Lyme Regis, Maggie Lane said that the bust of Jane Austen had also disappeared. She accepted the Chairman's invitation to join the sub-Committee, to work in conjunction with the Town Council dealing with the reinstatement of the Jane Austen Garden.
- 5.5 In reply to a query from Diane Spiers, Tom Carpenter apologised for the teething problems with the new tills in Jane Austen's House Museum and confirmed that they had been set up to deal with Gift Aid.
- 5.6 In reply to a query from Suzanne Notman, Catharine Freeman said that her research had shown there was little enthusiasm among younger people to join the Society, generally owing to their very many other commitments, including young children; however, Jane Austen's House Museum provided a lot of education to school-age children. Seamus Bates, of Glasgow University, said that he had set up a group in the University and would be very willing to assist other younger people to do the same.
- 5.7 In response to the disappointment expressed by Hilary Aiken that the Society had not appeared to liaise with the Winchester Festival, which was being held at the same time as the AGM, Elizabeth Proudman pointed out that the Tourist Office had guides, talks and walks. However the Society would ensure liaison for 2010.
- 5.8 In response from a member from Detroit, Michigan, both the Chairman and the Membership Secretary regretted that it was not possible to accept credit card payments, since there were insufficient transactions to justify the operational requirements. It was pointed out that JASNA did not accept such payments either.

4. Date of Next Meeting Saturday 17 July 2010

Branches and Groups

Kent

Our 2009 AGM on 21 March was once again held at Goodnestone Park, by kind permission of our Patron, Lady FitzWalter. After a delicious lunch, we were able to explore the gardens and admire the host of golden daffodils in the spring sunshine, before returning for our afternoon talk. This was given by Professor Michael Wheeler, whose text was 'To begin at the beginning: the openings of Jane Austen's novels'. The lecture was so lively and involving that no-one in the audience dared to take a post-prandial snooze.

The Summer Event was held on 6 June at Godmersham and was greatly enjoyed by all. There were two excellent talks. In the morning, Angela Barlow gave a wonderful dramatic presentation, 'Jane Austen and character: an actor's view'. Her readings were delightful, full of humour and insight, sending us back to the novels with renewed appreciation. A fine summer day allowed picnic lunches to be enjoyed in the beautiful gardens, after which we returned to the lecture theatre to listen to a thought-provoking talk given by Kate Drayton, from the University of East Anglia, on 'Extraordinary minds in Jane Austen's novels'. Her main theme was an exploration of the mind under pressure, particularly relating to *Persuasion* and to Jane Austen's concentration on Anne Elliot's consciousness.

Saturday 12 September saw the grand opening of the Tonbridge project and the inauguration of the Jane Austen Literary Walk in the town. The project was the mounting of a permanent exhibition at the Church of St Peter and St Paul (where Jane's father and ancestors worshipped) devoted to the friends and relations of the Austen family in Tonbridge. A useful link was made with the Kent County Council Library Walks, and guests stepped out on the Jane Austen Literary Walk, starting at Tonbridge Library, aided by an MP3 audio commentary made by actor Louise Jameson. At the reception at Tonbridge Library, Kent Publicity Officer Vivian Branson and Abigail Dunn, archivist at the church, were congratulated on their achievement in setting up the project; Vivian spoke about how it had been a privilege to work on the project, and Francis Austen said how important Tonbridge is in the Jane Austen life-story and how fascinated his brother Alwyn would have been. The exhibition was funded by generous donations from JASNA and from the Jane Austen Society, as well as from the Kent Branch. A guide has been written by Abi Dunn, *Jane Austen's Friends and Relations in Tonbridge: A Guide to the Memorials in the Church of St Peter and St Paul*, and the walk continues to be given regular publicity in a KCC leaflet, *Walks from the Library*.

The same weekend saw the Society's 2009 Conference held at the University of Kent in Canterbury, where one of the lectures was Clare Graham's excellent *Mrs Austen and Mr Fenton: Housekeeper and Housemaster*. Abi Dunn's guide to the memorials was on sale, as was a card commissioned from artist Sue Harrison, *Jane Austen in Kent*. The card has 18 attractive full-colour vignettes of Kentish places and people that Jane knew. Kent also provided the locations for the new TV adaptation of *Emma*, shown in the autumn, where Chilham became Highbury and Squerryes Court near Westerham became Hartfield.

The Annual Lunch was held at Broome Park on 21 November, where the glowing fire in the huge entrance hall, decorated with memories of Lord Kitchener's campaigns, was particularly welcoming on a cold day. After morning coffee, members were able to enjoy a splendid presentation given by Gillian Stapleton from History Wardrobe, 'Jane Austen's Christmas'. Gillian described the Christmas traditions of the period, and illustrated her talk by showing many popular games and entertainments, encouraging those present to compete in a game of 'bullet pudding', trying not to dislodge a chocolate button perched on a cake of extremely slippery flour. Gillian ended by dressing for a Christmas Ball. Her presentation was an excellent example of how history can be delivered in a scholarly yet thoroughly entertaining way.

The ninth edition of *Austenations* appeared in April, edited by our Chairman Averil Clayton. The 60 pages were filled by 17 articles, including contributions written by Branch members, and other Austen-related material. The editor invited more Branch members, to try their hand at writing, following Jane's guidance in a letter to Cassandra to 'write only for Fame, and without any view to pecuniary Emolument'. Three editions of our Branch Newsletter, edited by Ellie Morris, appeared during the year to keep members up to date with all that goes on in the Kent Branch.

The ever-lively Discussion Group, led by Bridget Duckenfield, met twice. In the spring, we met at our own Miss Bates's delightful cottage in Pluckley to discuss 'Six Favourite Characters in Jane Austen's Novels', and in the autumn at Vivian Branson's house in Tonbridge, when the subject was 'Changes and Innovations in Jane Austen's Life and Novels'. Such occasions, discussing novels we love in friendly company, are a bi-annual treat when we all learn something new. But then all Kent Branch meetings follow Anne Elliot's idea of good company: 'the company of clever, well-informed people who have a great deal of conversation'.

Jill Webster

Scottish Branch

This was a very exciting year for the Scottish Branch as it was our 5th anniversary, and we planned a year to remember. Our chairman Maureen Kelly's title for the year, 'A Year of Celebration', certainly proved true. We have done a lot, so much that I feel I have been in a constant spin. We had no sooner finished one activity than we were rushing headlong into another; in fact my theme might be 'A Year of Twirling'!

We started with our AGM in Dunfermline in February at which Professor Vivien Jones from the University of Leeds gave a wonderful talk on 'Jane Austen and her nieces'. Professor Jones examined what we can learn from Jane's letters about her relations with her two nieces, Anna Lefroy and Fanny Knight, contrasting the social situations of the two girls born only three months apart. Professor Jones's talk was perceptive and informative, but above all, it was extremely sensitive to the relationship of two young, impressionable girls and their aunt Jane.

Our next event was a return to the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

in Glasgow for our Open Meeting and Novel Study. Nora Bartlett from the University of St Andrews again delighted us with her gentle humour and insights into *Sense and Sensibility*; as always with our novel study days, there was a lively discussion afterwards.

The Strawberry Tea in June was at the House of Dun in Montrose. The Scottish architect William Adam Snr designed the house for the 13th Erskine laird of Dun in 1723 and the building was completed in 1730. In the course of an extremely interesting tour of the house, we saw the most wonderful embroidery work by Lady Augusta FitzClarence, who lived there in the early 1800s.

At the AGM in Chawton, members of the Glasgow University group again joined us. This year, as well as sporting their familiar Jane Austen themed T Shirts, they were selling Jane Austen tote bags. We were also thrilled that one of our members, Sharron Bassett, was elected onto the Jane Austen Society Committee.

In August, we were delighted to welcome Maggie Lane to Scotland. Maggie gave us a preview of the first chapter of a future book that she is working on, the title of her talk being 'Jane Austen: Genius, Wit and Taste'. Maggie used abstract nouns as the key concepts for this work; taking examples from the novels, she expanded on her title. This cleverly researched talk was greeted with great enthusiasm from the members. We were pleased to be joined at this meeting by members of the Northern Branch.

In September we had 'An Afternoon with Jane Austen' in Wardie Church in Edinburgh. Here members of the Branch were joined by The Edinburgh Assembly Dancers to perform an afternoon of music, dance and drama. The programme included songs taken from some of Jane's manuscripts, music from Haydn and Kotzwara, readings from *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*, period dancing from The Edinburgh Assembly Dancers and a grand finale where members of the branch performed Jane Austen's 'The Visit'.

November saw the Scottish Branch host its second one-day Symposium at Garvock House Hotel in Dunfermline, and we were extremely pleased that Margaret Dean, Lord Lieutenant of Fife, was there to open the occasion. The theme was 'Jane Austen and Occupations'. Our first speaker was Gavin Turner, author and lecturer. Gavin's title was "'How the Devil came he to make such a Will?": Jane Austen, Lawyers and the Law'. Gavin's gentle humour was evident as he began his talk by describing the view of the legal profession in Jane Austen's novels. Deirdre Le Faye was our next speaker; her title was 'Edward Knight – Landowner', and, having discussed the landowner as a profession in Jane Austen's time, she gave an illustrated talk on the places visited by Jane and her brother Edward and his family in and around Godmersham and the Kent area. Our final speaker was Professor David Bradley from the Universities of Abertay and Sheffield; his topic was 'Wellington's Army'. We were given a well researched and detailed power point presentation on life in the army during the time of Wellington and Napoleon.

The Birthday Lunch in December saw us again at Garvock House Hotel.

Patricia Bascom's topic was 'The Business of Dressing'; using some of Jane's letters, she delighted us all with her Jane Austen-inspired readings on dressing in Jane Austen's day.

A special publication, *A Scottish View*, was produced to commemorate our 5th anniversary year. Members and past speakers have contributed and Jane Odiwe has allowed us to reproduce her illustrations.

The Scottish Branch also takes an active interest in Society events and a number of our members journeyed to Kent to attend the Annual Conference. So it has been a year spent sharing our love of Jane Austen together with our many friends in the Jane Austen Society. The enthusiasm of the members and the hard work of the committee have enabled us to enjoy this year of celebration, and we are looking forward to many more years of the Scottish Branch.

Ann Bates

A Bogus Tale: Ellman, Charles Austen and HMS Aurora.

Clive Caplan

Recollections of a Sussex Parson by the Revd Edward Boys Ellman, published in 1912 (with 2006 reprint), contains a chapter entitled 'My Sailor Brother'. This was John Spencer Ellman, the author's eldest brother, who had a career in the Navy. In this chapter the following anecdote appears:

In 1826 ... the "Aurora" was at once ordered to the West Indies. While they were weighing anchor at Spithead [31 May 1826] the Captain died. At that time Captain Austen was living at Anglesea Terrace, Gosport, and with his glass was watching the "Aurora" preparing to sail, when he suddenly saw the anchor, which was being weighed, drop, and the Captain's flag half-masted. He immediately hired a small boat and hastened to the frigate, where he heard of Captain Maxwell's death. Hastening on shore again, he immediately posted up to London to the Admiralty, carrying the news of Captain Maxwell's sudden decease, and asked for the appointment. On being asked how soon he could be ready he said, "To-morrow". As it was desired that the "Aurora" should proceed to her destination without delay he got the appointment. He hastened back to Gosport, at once joined the frigate and sailed within four days of the former Captain's sudden death.

This delightful passage has been repeated, with minor variations, by George

Holbert Tucker in *A Goodly Heritage* (1983) and by Brian Southam in *Jane Austen and the Navy* (2000). More recently, a letter to the editor of the *Jane Austen Society News Letter* of October 2009 has extolled the episode as a genuine tribute to Charles Austen's character. The only problem with this general enthusiasm is that the whole story is a complete fabrication.

John Spencer Ellman RN should have known better. He had every opportunity to observe Charles Austen at close quarters, and to know the truth. On 30 March 1825, the fourteen-year-old Ellman had become a member of the crew of the *Aurora*. Consequently he was able to observe the events surrounding the death of his Captain Maxwell a year later. Again, in future years, after having gained his lieutenantcy (4 October 1832) and then being further promoted to commander (15 November 1845), he had served in the Second Anglo-Burmese War as captain of the gunboat *Salamander*. This placed him once again under the command of Charles Austen, then a Rear-Admiral, and in fact he was entrusted with the care and transportation of Charles's wife and daughter, who had accompanied the Admiral out to the Far East.

Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers (1906), was the first account of the naval careers of the two brothers Frank and Charles, and was co-authored by John H. Hubback (the grandson of Frank Austen), and by Hubback's daughter Edith. It could not have included Ellman's later tale of 1912. However, the story would have been available for a never issued second edition, which Southam gives as his source. Tucker provides two different references – one, an article by John Hubback (*Pen Portraits in Jane Austen's Novels, Cornhill*, LXV, July 1928, pp. 24-33) which repeats Ellman's story, and another, *Jane Austen: a Character Study* (1977) by Margaret Llewelyn. It is Llewelyn who provided the first reference to Charles Austen's letter to Sir Robert Liston quoted below.

The first problem with Ellman's veracity is with location. He erroneously claims that Charles was living at Gosport and that it was there that Captain Maxwell died, on board *Aurora*. Actually Charles was living at Plymstock, near Plymouth, where he had been an Inspecting Commander of the Coastguard since 1822, and where his wife Harriet had just given birth to their fourth child Henry on 16 April 1826, six weeks previously. The *Aurora* was also at Plymouth throughout. The ship's log (ADM 53/100) shows that she was victualling at Plymouth in the Hamoaze Dockyard at the end of May. With increasing readiness for sea, on Sunday 28 May, she moved to Plymouth Sound, where she would have been within the reach of surveillance by an inquisitive naval officer with a telescope.

The other feature of Ellman's tall tale is of Charles's frantic rush to the Admiralty in London to apply for the vacancy, and then what would have been an equally frantic rush back again to take command. Captain Maxwell died at 5.05 pm on Wednesday 31 May. Charles's appointment as Captain was dated 2 June and he first went on board the ship for divine service on Sunday 4 June. He attended Maxwell's funeral on shore next morning and took *Aurora* out to sea later that same afternoon. Fortunately there is an unimpeachable witness to what

really happened, and that is Charles Austen himself. In a letter he wrote to Sir Robert Liston¹ while at sea in the *Aurora*, dated 4 July 1826, he explains:

By the awefully sudden death of Captain Maxwell which took place as this ship was getting under weigh for the West Indies, she became vacant, I immediately applied for her, stating my readiness to start at a moments warning for any part of the World. By return of Post to my great surprize I received my Commission and on the following day we sailed, so here I am commanding one of the finest and best appointed Frigates that we have in commission....²

All is now clear, and as Jane Fairfax says in *Emma*, ‘The post-office is a wonderful establishment!’ A letter from Charles offering to volunteer must have travelled to London on 1 June, with the Admiralty issuing his Commission on the 2nd, and this response returning to him on the 3rd, so that he could go on board *Aurora* on the 4th and sail on the 5th. Well might the post office merit Jane Fairfax’s further praise: ‘The regularity and dispatch of it! ... it is really astonishing!’

So there we have it. John Spencer Ellman’s spurious concoction, relayed to us by his credulous brother Edward Boys Ellman in his reminiscences, was just a bogus tale. Such fictions tend to have a long run, with the attractive anecdote being repeated from one place to another and the refutation never quite catching up with the fabricated original. John Spencer Ellman’s motivation is hard to come by. No doubt like many another returned old salt he was valued as a raconteur by his stay-at-home friends and relations. When pressed by his brother for material, and having exhausted his well-worn stock of stories, he may just have decided that a little creative embellishment would harm no-one.³

Notes

- 1 Sir Robert Liston (1742-1836) was Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1793-6 and 1812-20. Charles Austen seems to have become acquainted with Liston and his wife when posted to the Mediterranean in *Phoenix* from 1814-16. See Clive Caplan, ‘The ships of Charles Austen’, *Report* for 2009 (this issue).
- 2 Deirdre Le Faye, *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 631. Trustees of the National Library of Scotland, MS 5676, f 87.
- 3 Also called into serious question must be another anecdote in the same chapter which suspiciously self-aggrandizes John Spencer Ellman himself. As captain of *Salamander* on the Burma campaign, he claims to have personally fired the opening shot right over Rear-Admiral Austen’s head, and with such astonishing accuracy that it struck its target, about two miles away. Then Charles is alleged to have remarked ‘The man who fired that shot is looking for promotion’. Well, maybe so. Or maybe not.

Jane Austen and Old Shoreham

Janet Clarke

Since Roman times, the ancient settlement of Old Shoreham in West Sussex has nestled peacefully beside the river Adur at the foot of the South Downs. Today it forms a quiet residential district north of Shoreham-by-Sea, the historic port set between Brighton and Worthing on the south coast; it is overlooked by the imposing edifice of Lancing College.

Old Shoreham gained an important place in the story of Jane Austen early in the 18th century, when it was home to Jane Monk, one of her most influential relatives. As the future Mrs Thomas Knight I of Godmersham, Jane Monk would play a pivotal role in determining the course of Jane Austen's life, and thereby the world of her novels. Echoing the opening lines of *Sense and Sensibility*, it may be said that 'the family of Monk had been long settled in Sussex. Their estate was large, and their residence was at Buckingham Park, in the centre of their property, where, for many generations they had lived in so respectable a manner, as to engage the general good opinion of their surrounding acquaintance.' Jane Monk's parents were William Monk of Buckinghams, Old Shoreham, and Hannah, née Stringer, of Goudhurst, Kent. Hannah's mother, an earlier Jane Austen, was the daughter of John Austen III of Grovehurst, Kent. He was the ancestor-in-common who made Jane Monk and the Revd George Austen second cousins.

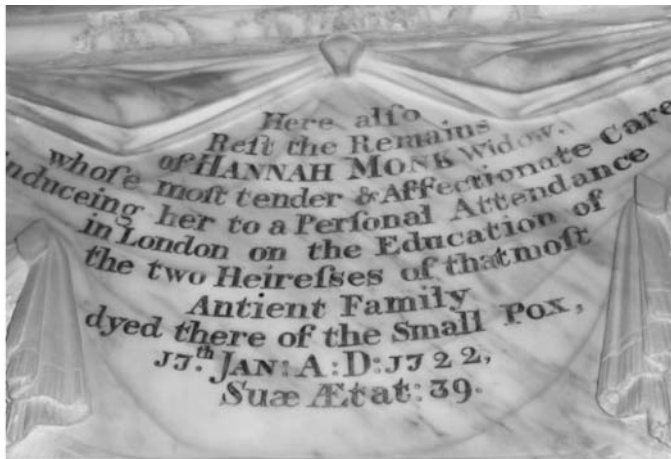


St Nicolas church and the 18th-century wooden bridge over the river Adur, Old Shoreham, 2010 (photo by Sean Evison)



St Nicholas church, Old Shoreham (photo by Susan Dawes)

The Monks' residence was Buckingham House, a fine mansion set in the delightful grounds of Buckingham Park, regarded as one of the most beautiful parks in the south, a short carriage ride from the heart of Old Shoreham. William Monk had inherited the estate from his grandfather William Blaker, together with property in nearby Southwick, which Jane Monk later 'took to her husband',¹ upon her marriage to Thomas May. This Southwick property eventually passed to Jane Austen's brother Edward. William and Hannah Monk had three children: Jane (born 1705),² Barbara and John, the latter of whom died in infancy. He lies buried in the family vault in St Nicolas church, Old Shoreham, beside his parents, who were also to meet untimely deaths.



*Part of the Monk memorial in St Nicolas Church,
Old Shoreham (photo by Susan Dawes)*

The church of St Nicolas is one of the most interesting in Sussex, having Saxon masonry and striking Norman features. Its two-staged lantern tower, with eight circular openings and a low pyramidal spire, is considered 'one of the most beautiful Norman towers in the country'³. The Monk family memorial, found on the south wall of the nave, records that William died on 2 May 1714, aged 29. He was known for his 'principles of honour and justice', being 'generally beloved and esteemed while he lived, and lamented by all at his death, but especially by his loving consort Hannah'. She 'whose most tender & Affectionate Care, inducing her to a Personal Attendance in London on the Education of the two Heiresses of that most Antient Family, dyed there of the Small Pox' on 17 January 1722, at the age of 39.⁴

In 1729, Jane Monk, now wealthy in her own right, married Thomas May (formerly Brodnax) of Godmersham Park, Kent, a union which would prove extremely advantageous to her Austen cousins. In 1734, Jane and her sister Barbara sold the family estate of Buckingham, but to maintain a link with the area, Jane and Thomas May retained ownership of her land in Southwick. The Mays' wealth increased further in 1738, when Thomas's second cousin, Elizabeth Knight of West Dean, bequeathed him her estates of Steventon and Chawton in Hampshire, and Cobden and Lyminster in West Sussex. To comply with the terms of the will, Thomas May changed his surname, by Act of Parliament, to that of Knight. Thomas was also said to have been left Elizabeth Knight's principal estate of West Dean, just north of Chichester, but in fact it passed at once to the family of her late second husband, Bulstrode Peachy.

The church of St Andrew at West Dean, behind the great house, has a fascinating link of its own with Jane Austen, for it holds a handsome carved monument to the Lewkenor family, owners of the Steventon and Chawton estates in the 17th century. Today, West Dean's impressive flint mansion, designed by James Wyatt and built in 1804, houses the internationally renowned college of the Edward James Foundation. Its picturesque landscape (worthy of any Jane Austen production) and award-winning gardens are open to the public, complete with a superb visitor centre, opened by Prince Charles. In the immediate vicinity of West Dean also lies the estate of Rawmere (Mid-Lavant), which Thomas Brodnax of Godmersham had inherited earlier in 1726, causing him to take the surname of May. Rawmere was later sold in 1777 to the Duke of Richmond, who was then enlarging his glorious and now famous estate of Goodwood.

Jane and Thomas (May) Knight had always been kindly disposed towards their less fortunate Austen cousins, whom they were pleased to help by offering the young, newly ordained George Austen, the living of Steventon. There, in the quiet leafy countryside of north Hampshire, the Revd George Austen and his wife Cassandra raised their lively family of eight children. Their eldest daughter was named after her mother, and their second daughter born in 1775 (the future famous novelist) was named Jane, perhaps in honour of their Monk/Knight benefactress.

In 1767, the Knight estate of Cobden in West Sussex was sold to William Frankland of neighbouring Muntham, north of Worthing. Frankland, a retired

explorer and inventor, created an exhibition at Muntham of his many artefacts and inventions, which, by the time of Jane Austen's stay in Worthing in 1805, had become a popular visitor attraction. Indeed, it is possible that the Austens themselves were curious to view both Muntham and Cobden, that autumn.

After the deaths of Jane and Thomas Knight, their heir Thomas Knight II and his wife Catherine continued a fond relationship with their Steventon cousins, favouring in particular young Edward Austen. When they later found themselves to be childless, they wished to adopt him as their heir. So, with his parents' consent, Edward took his place in the upper-class world of Godmersham, where in 1791, he married Elizabeth Bridges of Goodnestone Park, who bore him eleven children. In 1812, following the deaths of his adoptive parents, and in order to inherit his full fortune, Edward also took the surname of Knight. Jane Austen, like the rest of the family, benefited immensely from her brother's elevated status, staying regularly in the grand surroundings of Godmersham Park. Her encounters with the higher social circles of Kent supplied a rich source of inspiration for her future works.

In September 1805, a family party comprising Edward, his wife and daughter Fanny, her governess Ann Sharp, and sisters Jane and Cassandra, set off from Kent for a seaside holiday in newly fashionable Worthing. Their route, via Brighton, would have taken them through Southwick and the land passed down from Jane Monk. It is possible Edward already had business interests in the area, for by about 1830 he was said to be the 'principal proprietor in Southwick'. Proceeding westerly from Southwick, the Austens would soon have passed the stately presence of Buckingham House, before arriving in the heart of Old Shoreham. There, the 16th-century Red Lion coaching inn would no doubt have made a welcome sight, with the promise of rest and refreshment. From this convenient stopping point, it would have been natural for Jane and her family then to cross the lane, in order to view the interior of St Nicolas church, standing majestically overlooking the river. Inside, the Monk memorial spoke eloquently of their former, highly esteemed Sussex relations, through whom they had gained so much. Another familiar name which might have caught their attention, was that of Montague Cholmeley (1711-1785), who was appointed vicar of St Nicolas in 1751 by Magdalen College Oxford, where he was a Fellow. He shared the same surname as Jane Austen's aunt, Mrs Jane Leigh-Perrot, before her marriage to Mrs Austen's brother. Indeed, both Mrs Leigh-Perrot and the former vicar of Old Shoreham descended from the Cholmeleys of Easton in Lincolnshire, suggesting that they were related. Moreover, Mrs Leigh-Perrot had corresponded with a cousin, a later Mountague Cholmeley, while she awaited trial in Ilchester in 1800. Leaving Old Shoreham on the final leg of their journey to Worthing, the Austen party would have been conveyed over the river Adur by the wooden bridge, constructed in 1781. Looking back towards Shoreham, they would no doubt have glimpsed the shipyards, where earlier in 1785, the sixteen-gun sloop *Scorpion*, in which Charles Austen had served as Lieutenant in 1798, had been built.

Re-tracing their route through Southwick and Old Shoreham today, one finds

the poignant half-shell remains of Buckingham House, re-modelled c. 1820 by J. B. Rebecca, but largely destroyed by a fire in 1910, its blank windows gazing starkly onto the remnant of its once renowned parkland.

Buckingham Park is now a much enjoyed public recreational space, regarded as an oasis by local residents; its verdant grassland, dotted with ancient trees, slopes gently down, affording a delightful view of the distant shimmering sea. The Red Lion remains a popular venue for locals and visitors alike, and the old wooden bridge still stands astride the Adur. The true gem of Old Shoreham, however, is St Nicolas church, which continues to serve the parish as it has done faithfully for over a thousand years. Stepping inside through the Norman doorway, one can easily imagine the Monk family gathered for worship some three hundred years ago, followed in 1805, perhaps, by Jane Austen calling in to pay her respects. Visiting Old Shoreham today, one is linked directly with the early home of Jane Monk, Mrs Thomas Knight I, through whom Jane Austen became forever associated with Steventon, Godmersham and Chawton. This relative, perhaps more than any other, influenced for good the fortune of the Austen family, and the destiny of our best-loved female novelist.



*The east face of Buckingham House, 2010
(photo by Susan Dawes)*

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*William Daniell, Shoreham Harbour 1823 (by kind permission of
Martin Hayes, County Local Studies Librarian, West Sussex
County Council Library Service)*

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Notes

- 1 Victoria County History (Sussex) Volume IV (West Dean Manor).
- 2 Elwes, Dudley George Carey FSA, *Castles Mansions and Manors of West Sussex*, p. 211.
- 3 Alumni Archives, Magdalene College, Oxford.
- 4 Cheal, Henry, *The Story of Shoreham*, p. 155

Austen Papers 1704-1856: *an Updating*

Deirdre Le Faye

During the early part of the twentieth century Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (1872-1961) – hereafter for convenience sake referred to as RAAL, which was the style he used in personal correspondence – one of the grandsons of the Revd James Edward Austen-Leigh, became the family historian and archivist, collecting papers and information from his cousins in the Francis and Charles Austen lines of descent as well as from more distant kinsfolk, and adding these to the documents already preserved in the Austen-Leigh family. By profession RAAL was a printer, being a director of the firm of Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd.; and apart from collaborating with his uncle William Austen-Leigh in writing the first proper biography of Jane Austen (*Jane Austen, her Life and Letters*, London, 1913), this professional involvement enabled him to print privately in 1942 through his own firm extracts from a collection of family letters, which he entitled *Austen Papers 1704-1856*. As this was only a private scholarly venture and wartime conditions precluded proper publishing, copies are nowadays very scarce and hard to come by, which is all the more unfortunate as the collection contains some seminal information on the Austen family which is in the main still only in manuscript. It therefore seems appropriate to update modern scholars as to what the volume contains, how much of the contents has now been published and therefore become readily available, how much remains in manuscripts, and where these are located.

RAAL arranged his material more or less chronologically, dividing it into chapters relating to individual members of his family, as under:

- I Elizabeth Austen and Francis Austen, 1704-21 (pp. 1-19)
- II Steventon, 1770-75 (pp. 20-33)
- III India and the Hancocks, 1769-76 (pp. 34-82)
- IV Eliza in France, etc., 1777-86 (pp. 83-119)
- V Eliza in England, 1786-92 (pp. 120-150)
- VI Eliza in England (continued), 1794-1802 (pp. 151-178)
- VII Bath, Ilchester and Taunton, 1790-1800 (pp. 179-219)
- VIII Austens and Leighs, 1794-1817 (pp. 220-254)
- IX Austens and Leighs (continued), 1818-1845 (pp. 255-295)
- X Austens and Quincys, 1852-56 (pp. 296-320)

Apart from the main text of transcriptions of the letters and editorial comments upon them, he put sidetracks of other explanatory information into several appendixes:

- I The Comte de Feuillide (pp. 321-23)
- II Philip Dormer Stanhope (pp. 324-26)

- III The Stoneleigh Inheritance (p. 327)
- IV James Edward Austen at Winchester College (pp. 328-29)
- V Extracts from Wills, etc. (pp. 330-34)

followed by various family pedigrees, pp. 336-46 (unfortunately sometimes not very accurate); and ended with a general index.

Although RAAL married twice, he had no children, and the family archive therefore passed to the descendants of his sister Kathleen (1866-1945), who had married Edward Impey in 1891; and they in turn deposited the bulk of the documents in the Hampshire Record Office in 1993 (shelf-mark 23M93/-). Since the publication of *Austen Papers* in 1942, however, some letters had been lost, probably destroyed when RAAL's chambers in Albany were blitzed and possibly looted during the bombing of London in World War II.¹ Of the documents used in RAAL's ten main chapters, the present situation is as follows:

- I. Elizabeth Austen's 'Memorandums' and her domestic account book passed to her son Francis and so on to his descendants who lived at Kippington near Sevenoaks in Kent. RAAL saw these items in 1909, and published a fair amount of the information they contained in *Austen Papers*. The manuscripts were finally given to the Jane Austen Society in 1971 by another descendant, Miss Susan Radcliffe, and are now kept in the archives of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust at Chawton; they still await complete transcription and publication.
- II The nine letters from the Steventon Austens are transcribed and discussed below; eight of the manuscripts were given to the Jane Austen Memorial Trust by RAAL in 1953, but the ninth was never in his possession. Since that date I have been able to study the mss and correct RAAL's transcripts as published in *Austen Papers*; these unfortunately were often very careless, not measuring up to modern standards of transcribing and editing, hence my transcripts should now be the versions used when reference to these letters is needed. Extracts from some of the letters also appear in my *Jane Austen, a Family Record* (2nd edn. CUP, 2004).
Another letter from Steventon, dated 21 July 1771, which had become separated from this group and which RAAL in consequence never saw, was purchased by the late Mr T. Edward Carpenter in the middle of the last century, and is also in the JAMT archives. I have already published its transcript in 'Three Austen Family Letters', *Notes and Queries* 32:3 (September 1985), pp. 329-30; but as the contents lead straight on to Mrs Austen's letter of 8 November 1772, it seems desirable to reprint it here, numbered **4(a)**.
- III Following Tysoe Saul Hancock's death in Calcutta in 1775, his letter-book, in which he made copies of his letters home to his wife and daughter in England, came into the hands of Warren Hastings, whom he had named as one of his executors. It therefore survives in the British Library, as part of the vast Warren Hastings archive (Add Mss 29,125-41,608, shelf mark for this

one item AddMss 29,236). RAAL made only a few very selective extracts from the letter-book, omitting many interesting details of Hancock's life and business ventures in India. Some letters from Mrs Philadelphia Hancock are also in the Hastings archive.

IV, V, and VI. All these chapters have been subsumed in my *Jane Austen's 'Outlandish Cousin': the Life and Letters of Eliza de Feuillide* [JAOC for short reference], which I published in 2002 (London, The British Library), and in which I included Mrs Hancock's letters and more extracts from Hancock's letter-book.

VII This chapter deals with Mrs Leigh-Perrot's imprisonment and trial for the alleged theft of a card of lace from a shop in Bath, and the case and trial were discussed by Sir Frank MacKinnon in his monograph *Grand Larceny* (OUP, 1937). Some of the letters he published are now missing from the Austen-Leigh archive.

VIII, IX and X RAAL's extracts from these later letters were again very selective, and fuller publication would be warranted. Most of the documents in these three chapters are now in the Hampshire Record Office (23M93/-, handlist available).

Material from the five Appendixes has been used in *Family Record* or in *JAOC* as appropriate; and more detailed family pedigrees can be found in my *Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family 1600-2000* (CUP, 2004). Wills which are in The National Archives can now be traced and downloaded via the internet.

The letters from Steventon, 1770-75

All these are addressed to Susannah, née Weaver (1716-1811), wife of the Revd George Austen's elder half-brother William-Hampson Walter (1722-98). There is no definite information as to W.H. Walter's occupation or profession, but it seems he was the agent or steward for a local landowner, Henry Lyell.² He and his family lived at several places in West Kent in the later part of the eighteenth century, presumably moving around as his employment required. The Walters had seven children, and their daughter Philadelphia (named for her aunt, Mrs Philadelphia Hancock, and known as Philly, Phylly or Phyllida in the family) was very friendly with her cousin, Mrs Hancock's daughter Eliza de Feuillide – see *JAOC* for more detailed information. The young Walters were: Weaver (1747-1814), who became a clergyman, married late in life and left no issue; Sarah/Sally (1749-70), who died when on the verge of marriage; William (the 'Bill' of the letters) (1750-87), went to Jamaica and died there; George (1754-79) followed his brother to Jamaica and likewise died there; John (born and died 1757); James (1759-1845) became a clergyman and also Headmaster of Brigg Grammar School in Lincolnshire, and left many descendants; Philadelphia (1761-1834), who stayed at home tending her elderly parents and was only able to marry in 1811 following her mother's death.

There were obviously many more letters exchanged between the Austens and

the Walters down the years, but only some specific groups or single manuscripts have survived: Eliza de Feuillide wrote to Phylly (these letters are all given in *JAOC*), Jane herself wrote the letter of condolence to Phylly when W.H. Walter died in 1798 (No. 8 in my edition of *Jane Austen's Letters*), and Jane's sister Cassandra wrote to Phylly in their later lives. These letters were preserved by Phylly, but as she had no issue from her belated marriage they passed to her brother the Revd James Walter and his family in Lincolnshire. It was one of his great-grandsons, John Charles Guy Nicholson, of Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincs (died 1925) who gave Nos. 1-8 of this present group to RAAL in 1919. Letter No. 9, of 17 December 1775, containing the news of Jane Austen's birth, was then in the possession of another of James Walter's descendants, his grand-daughter Mrs West, and RAAL published the text from a copy made by his uncle the Revd Arthur Henry Austen-Leigh (died 1917), at some unknown date. This letter must unfortunately now be considered as lost.

1. *Revd George Austen, from London, to Mrs Walter*

Bolton Street,
2 May 1770

My Dear Sister Walter,

Understanding from my Brother that he is soon to leave You for some Weeks, I cannot help for many reasons wishing that you would pass the time of his absence with us at Steventon, I need not say you will make your Sister Austen & myself very happy by such a Visit, & I hope the change of Air & place may be of some little service to you. I shall return Home on Saturday sennight next, and as a Chaise will hold you & I & Philly we may travel very commodiously. You must not refuse my request & I dare [say] you will not, I shall therefore expect you in Town & will add no more at present but my love to George, James & Philly.

I am, my Dear Sister,
Yr. Affec^{ate} Brother,
Geo. Austen

2. *Revd George Austen to Mrs Walter*

Steventon 8th July, 1770

Dear Sister Walter,

I had, before yours arrived, heard of your safe arrival in Town & of your meeting with my Brother & Weaver, which I sincerely rejoiced at, as I do to learn from yourself that you have happily reached the Parsonage & found all well there. The Day I received your kind Letter, for which accept my thanks, your sister set out for London to enter on her office of Nurse in Ordinary, & the same Post likewise brought me intelligence that she was too late for the Ceremony She intended being present at, for Mrs Cooper was happily brought to Bed last Sunday morning of a Boy, & both well; She came it seems, rather before her time,

& of course the Babe is a small one, but however very like to live;³ You may possibly have heard of this from Sister Hancock, but lest you should not I could not help mentioning it, as I am sure the News will give you great pleasure. – I don't much like this lonely kind of Life, you know I have not been much used to it, & yet I must bear with it about three weeks longer, at which time I expect my Housekeeper's return, & to make it the more welcome she will bring my Sister Hancock & Bessy along with her. – You may depend on it that if it is tolerably convenient we will return your Visit another

[p. 2] Summer, & I say we, for I certainly shall not let my Wife come alone, & I dare say she will not leave her children behind her: I am much obliged to you for your kind wish of George's improvement. – God knows only how far it will come to pass, but from the best judgment I can form at present, we must not be too sanguine on this Head; be it as it may, we have this comfort, he cannot be a bad or a wicked child. * – I beg my love to my Brother & tell him I shall hope to see him at Steventon this Summer, tho' your Impatience prevented his coming in the Spring. – The only News I have to send you, & the chief subject of conversation in our Neighbourhood is the quarrels of Mr. Hillman & Squire Harwood, they have commenced actions against each other & seem to promise good Sport for the Lawyers. My love to Weaver George James & Philly. – My James joins me in this; he & his Brothers are both well, & what will surprise you, bear their Mother's absence with great Philosophy; as I doubt not they would mine, & turn all their little affections towards those who were about them & good to them; this may not be a pleasing reflection to a fond Parent, but is certainly wisely designed by Providence for the Happiness of the Child. –

I am, Dear Sister, with the warmest wishes for the Happiness of You & yours.

Yr affect. Brother,
Geo Austen

* *interlineated in another hand, probably that of James Walter's daughter Anna-Maria Philadelphia, are some semi-legible words: 'until he never had his ...' [?]*

3. Mrs George Austen to Mrs Walter

Steventon, Augst. 26th [1770]

My Dear Sister,

I receivd your kind Letter in Town and should have thankd you for it before now, but was so hurried while I was in Town that I deferrd it till I got home, and then Mr. Austen told me he had wrote to you very lately, and so I thought I should stay, a little longer. I was not so happy as to see my Nephew Weaver, suppose he was hurried in time as I think every one is in Town: 'tis a sad place, I would not live in it on any account: one has not time to do one's duty either to God or Man. I had the pleasure of leaving my Sister tolerably well & the Child quite so, they

are now moved into the Country, I hope change of air will enable her to pick up her Strength. – We talk of going there and to Scarlets in about three Weeks time, and shall be absent a full month. [I] shall take both my Boys with me; as I know you don't love writing, and as you are so kind to say it gives you pleasure to hear from us, I will write again soon, but do let us hear of you sometimes, the oftener the better; and I dare say George or James will be your secretary whenever you are busy or not in a writing humour. Mr Austen wrote to Bill about a fortnight ago, I hope he will receive it. Sister Hancock staid with us only a few days, she had more Courage than you had,

[p. 2] and set out in a Post-Chaise with only her little Bessy, for she brought neither Clarinda or Peter with her⁴ but believe she sincerely repented, before she got to her Journey's end, for in the middle of Bagshot Heath the Postilion discovered she had dropped the Trunk from off the Chaise. She immediately sent him back with the Horses to find it, intending to sit in the Chaise till he returned, but was soon out of patience and began to be pretty much frightened, so began her Walk to the Golden Farmer about two miles off, where she arrived half dead with fatigue, it being in the middle of a very hot day. When she was a little recovered she recollected she had left all the rest of her things (amongst which were a large parcel of India Letters, which she had received the night before, and some of them she had not read) in the Chaise with the Door wide open, She sent a man directly after them and got them all safe and after some considerable time the Driver came with the Trunk, and without any more misfortune got to Bolton Street about Nine o'clock. – She is now settled in her Cottage, her direction is at Byfleet, near Cobham, Surrey. –The Letters brought good accounts both of My Brother Hancock and Mr. Hastings. – To be sure if Cossen Harry gets this Living, Madam [p. 3] must enlarge her Money Bag.⁵ What Luck we shall have with those sort of Cows I can't say. My little Alderney one turns out tolerably well, and makes more Butter than we use, and I have just bought another of the same sort, but as her Calf is but just gone, can not say what she will be good for yet. Indeed my Dear Sister I do most sincerely pity your lonely situation, should have been most happy had fortune placed us in the same neighbourhood. Am sorry we are not likely to see my Brother Walter * at present, but hope he will come to us so soon as 'tis convenient to him.

Neddy is not so ungrateful to forget so good an Aunt but talks of you very often. Thank God they are all very well, as are also Mr. Austen and myself. Our kindest Love to you & my Brother, Nephews & Niece.

I am my Dear Sister

Your very affect.

C. Austen

Mrs Walter
at the Parsonage
near Tunbridge,
Kent.

* *interlineated* 'my Grandfather'

4. *Mrs George Austen to Mrs Walter*

Steventon Dec 9th [1770]

Dear Sister,

Thank you kindly for your Letter, and Oppedeldock [*sic*] receipt.⁶ Thank God we are all very well, and my little Neddy's Cough seems entirely to have left him - he was so well that I ventured to leave him with his Maid for a few Days, while we went to Southcote, where we found my Sister, Dr Cooper and the little Boy quite well, I had not seen her before since I left them in Town last July - We went on Monday & returned last night and found Neddy quite well. The Day after Christmas Day we are to go to my Bror. Perrot's for about Ten Days, but there I shall take Neddy as well as Jemmy, there being no little ones there to catch anything bad of

[p. 2] us. I wish my Dear Brother & Sister Walter were not more than thirty instead of Eighty miles from us, for believe me 'tis the distance, not the place you live in, which prevents my visiting you so often as I could wish. For your own sake I wish you were removed from the Parsonage, as I think you would be happier any where else, but as to myself it is a matter of indifference, I know & care so very little about your Neighbours, that they would never prevent my coming, as my visit wd. be to you, not to them. I rejoice to hear so good an account of Dear Bill, and doubt not but he will continue to deserve the best of Characters. -

Mr. Hillman & Mr. Harwood are still at Variance, but the former goes away at Lady Day: the House is lett to two very
[p. 3] young single Gentlemen.

My poor little George is come to see me to-Day, he seems pretty well, tho' he had a fit lately, it was near a Twelvemonth since he had one before, so was in hopes they had left him, but must not flatter myself so now. I find my Sister Hancock has been much incommoded by the Waters, so fancy she won't be sorry when the time comes for her going to Town, which I think she says is to be next Month. I have a great notion she will soon be tired of Byfleet as it seems to be a very bad Winter place.

My Dear Bror. & Sist. farewell, our kindest Love attend you and your three Children.

I am, my Dear Sist,
yrs. affect^{ly}

C. Austen

To Mrs Walter
at the Parsonage
near Tunbridge,
Kent

Steventon July 21st 1771

My Dear Sister Walter

I have long been indebted to you for a very kind Letter, for which I now return you many thanks, as also for your Congratulations on the Birth of my little Boy. Thank God I am got quite stout [*strong*] again, had an extraordinary good time and Lying in, and am Blessd with as fine a Boy as perhaps you ever saw, he is much the largest I ever had, and thrives very fast. Mr. Austen and my other Boys are all well.⁷ I should rejoyce to see you my Dear Sister, but it is not in my power to take any Journeys at present, my little family grows so numerous, there is no taking them abroad, nor can I leave them with an easy mind. My Sister Cooper has got a little Girl, not quite three weeks younger than my little Henry.⁸ She had a very good time and is pure well, and so is the Child, only remarkably small, as I hear, the Boy wanted four days of being a year old

[p. 2] when the Girl was born, so she seems to be making up for her lost time. Mr. Austen had a Letter from your good Son William as lately. Sister Hancock sends us word she has had Letters by these last Ships both from Mr. Hancock & Mr. Hastings, with good accounts of their Health and Welfare; you rejoyce I am certain that the latter is appointed Governor of Bengal. What a comfort as well of what real Consequence will he be to our good Bror. Hancock; I hope my Bror. Walter is got quite well of that complaint in his Leg you mentiond, are we ever to have the pleasure of seeing him at Steventon? perhaps he intends it this Summer, perhaps he will travail [*sic*] in his Chair, and then perhaps you

[p. 3] my Dear Sister will accompany him. I am sure I need not say how happy you would make us. I wish we were not so many Miles apart. Nothing has happend in these parts w[or]th relating. Our very few Neighbours are just as they were, only instead of the Hillmans we have got two agreeable young Men at Ash Park. Mr. and Mrs. Harwood are quite reconciled to their Son and Son's Wife, and I hear the young Woman behaves very well and the young Squire continues monstrously fond [of] her. Our best and kindest Love attend you, my Dear Sister, my Bror., George, James, & P[hylly. I] hope this will find you all well, and t[hat] you will believe me at all times

your very affection[ate sister]

C. Au[sten]

To
Mrs. Walter
at the Parsonage
near Tunbridge
Kent

[A few words have been lost owing to the breaking of the seal.]

5. *Mrs George Austen to Mrs Walter*

Steventon Novr. 8th, 1772

Dear Sister,

Your Letter was indeed very welcome as I had long wishd much to hear from you, indeed I have several times being going to write purposely to enquire after you all, but still put it off from time to time in hopes of seeing you and my Brother Walter at Steventon, for we quite depended on your coming this year, as you disappointed us the last. As to my travelling into Kent it is not to be thought of, with such a young family as I have around me. My little Boy is come home from Nurse, and a fine stout little fellow he is, and can run anywhere, so now I have all four at home, and some time in January I expect a fifth,⁹ so you see it will not be in my power to take any Journeys for one while; so I hope you will come indeed so soon as the bad Winter Weather is over.

[p. 2] We are very glad you have such accounts from Jamaica, and that you are all pretty well; and hope my Bror.'s Heel will not be bad again. Thank God we are all well in health, I begin to be very heavy & bundling as usual, I believe my Sister Hancock will be so good as to come and nurse me again, for which I am sure I shall be much obligd to her, as it will be a bad time of the year for her to take so long a Journey.

Dr Cooper & my Sister with their Boy & Girl were all well when I heard from them last – they are quite settled at Bath. My Bror. and Sister Perrot have both been ill, my Bror. is got pure well again & my Sister is better. I have nothing more to add at present but our kind Love to my Bror., & yourself, to George, James and Philly, and that I am at all times,

yr. affect^{le} sister
C. Austen

6. *Mrs George Austen to Mrs Walter*

Steventon, June 6th, 1773

I thank you kindly, my Dear Sister, for your Letter; We hope this will find you all in good Health, as it leaves us. – Mr Austen was sorry his time would not permit him to see you at the Parsonage, but the Business which he went about required so much attendance, that it was not in his power. – We will not give up the hopes of seeing you both (and as many of your young People as you can conveniently bring) at Steventon before the Summer is over; Mr Austen wants to shew his Bror. his Lands & his Cattle & many other matters; and I want to shew you my Henry & my Cassy, who are both reckoned fine Children. I suckled my little Girl thro' the first quarter,

[p. 2] she has been weand and settled at a good Woman's at Dean just Eight weeks; she is very healthy and lively, and puts on her short Petticoats to-day – Jemmy & Neddy are very happy in a new Play-fellow, Lord Lymington, whom Mr Austen has lately taken the charge of, he is between five & Six years old, very backward of his Age, but good temperd and orderly: he is the Eldest Son of Lord

Portsmouth who lives about ten miles from hence. – My Sister Cooper has made us a Visit this Spring, she seems well in health, but is grown vastly thin – her Boy & Girl are well, the youngest almost two years old, and she has not been Breeding since, so perhaps she has done. We expect my Bror. & Sister Perrot to-morrow for a fortnight, we have not seen them near a twelvemonth.

[p. 3] I have got a nice Dairy fitted up, and am now worth a Bull & Six Cows, and you would laugh to see them; for they are not much bigger than Jack-asses – and here I have got Turkies; & Ducks & Chicken for Phylly's amusement. In short you must come, and, like Hezekiah, I will shew you all my Riches.¹⁰

At present I have nothing more to add, but our Love to my Bror. and yourself, our nephews and niece – Believe me my Dear Sister at all times most affect^{ly} yrs

C. Austen

Jemmy & Neddy desire their Duty & Love.

To

Mrs Walter

at the Parsonage

near Tunbridge

Kent

7. Mrs George Austen to Mrs Walter

Steventon, Dec 12 1773

Dear Sister,

I thank you much for your kind Letter, and the receipt for Potatoe Cakes, I have not yet found time to try it, but dare say they must be very nice and light.

I am sorry to hear from my Sister Hancock that Sr G. Hampson¹¹ has met with a bad accident, and has in consequence of it been under Surgeons hands some time; but of what nature either the accident or hurt were she does not say. It will certainly be a good opportunity for my Nephew George to accompany him to Jamaica in the Spring; but I know you will suffer much when the time comes, tho I am sure you must be sensible it is high time for the young Man to have [p. 2] some employment, and I dare say he will be quite happy to be with his Brother; our best wishes will ever attend them both.

I thank God we are all quite well, and my little Girl is almost ready to run away. Our new Pupil, Master Vanderstegen, has been with us about a Month, he is near fourteen years old; is very good temperd and well disposed. Ld Lymington has left us, his mamma began to be alarmd at the Hesitation in his Speech, which certainly grew worse, and is going to take him to London in hopes a Mr Angier (who undertakes to cure that Disorder) may be of Service to him. Remember my Dear Bror. and Sist, you promised us a visit from our Nephew James* these approaching Holidays, and we depend upon your word and shall begin and shall be very gla

We send our Love ...

my B ...

* *Interlineated here: "Walter your Grandfather"; corner of paper torn away, hence last four lines incomplete.*

8. Mrs George Austen to Mrs Walter

Steventon, 20th Augst. 1775

My Dear Sister,

Your Letter, for which I sincerely thank you, gave us very great pleasure by the good account it brought of our nephew George's safe arrival at Jamaica, which was a circumstance we had for many Weeks been very desirous of hearing; may all your future Letters from both the young Men be as favorable in the accounts they contain of their Health & Welfare as this was. Weaver has our warmest wishes for his success at Cambridge. Many thanks for your good wishes, we are all, I thank God, in good health, and I am more nimble and active than I was last time, expect to be confined some time in November. My last Boy is very stout, and has run alone these two Months, and he is not yet Sixteen Months old.¹² My little Girl talks all day long, and in my opinion is a very entertaining Companion.

[p.2] Henry has been in Breeches some months, and thinks himself near as good a man as his Bror. Neddy, indeed no one would Judge by their looks that there was above three years and a half difference in their ages, one is so little and the other so great. Master Van is got very well again, & has been with us again these three months, he is gone home this morning for a few Holidays.

The Wheat promises to be very good this year, but we have had a most sad wet time for getting it in, however we got the last Load in yesterday, just four weeks after we first began Reaping. I am afraid the weather is not likely to mend for it Rains very much to-day, and we want dry weather for our Peas and Oats, I don't hear of any Barley ripe yet, so am afraid it will be [p 3] very late before Harvest is over.

I was in hopes I should have seen you in Hampshire this Summer, but it is now getting so late in the year that I suppose I must not th[ink] of it, and especially as you have so many young people under your care. I am sure [I] should be most sincerely glad to see y[ou if] you could come. I have nothing more to add [at] present but our Love and good wishes [to your]self and my Bror, and to all your young ones. I am very glad to find Mr Freeman undertakes the care of the little Orphans.¹³ My Boys desire Duty and Love,

From your very affect^e Sister,

C. Austen

To Mrs Walter
at the Parsonage
near Tunbridge
Kent

9. *Revd George Austen to Mrs Walter*

Steventon, 17th Dec 1775

Dear Sister,

You have doubtless been for some time in expectation of hearing from Hampshire, and perhaps wondered a little we were in our old age grown such bad reckoners but so it was, for Cassy certainly expected to have been brought to bed a month ago: however last night the time came, and without a great deal of warning, everything was soon happily over. We have now another girl, a present plaything for her sister Cassy and a future companion. She is to be Jenny, and seems to me as if she would be as like Henry, as Cassy is to Neddy. Your sister thank God is pure well after it, and sends her love to you and my brother, not forgetting James and Philly. Have you had any fresh news from Jamaica? I suppose you have heard of the poor way Cope Freeman is in.¹⁴ I am most sincerely sorry both for him and his father. I have not been able to get any information about the Fellowship of St John's since I wrote my brother an answer to his enquiries; but think I was right in what I then told him. Let my brother know his friend Mr Evelyn is going to treat us with a ploughing match in this neighbourhood on next Tuesday, if the present frost does not continue and prevent it, Kent against Hants for a rump of beef, he sends for his own ploughman from St Clair. Does my brother know a Mr Collis, he says he is very well acquainted with him, he visited me to buy some oats for Evelyn's hunters.

I am, dear sister,

Your affecte. brother,

Geo. Austen

The Parsonage
near Tunbridge
Kent

Notes

- 1 Personal communications from Impey family, 1980s.
- 2 Unpublished reminiscences of W.H. Walter's daughter-in-law, Frances-Maria Walter; a twentieth-century typescript of this ms is in the Lincolnshire Record Office.
- 3 Edward Cooper, 1770-1833.
- 4 Elizabeth Hancock, until she re-christened herself 'Eliza' in her teens, was known as Bessy or Betsy in her childhood. Clarinda and Peter were Mrs Hancock's servants.
- 5 Mr Austen's cousin, the Revd Harry Austen (1726-1807) was then rector of West Wickham in Kent but was presumably hopeful of gaining some more wealthy living, which would undoubtedly have pleased his wife Mary Hooker.
- 6 Opodeldoc was a liniment, a home-made remedy which continued popular well into the nineteenth century. A domestic handbook of 1866 gives the following recipe: 'Dissolve 1 oz of camphor in a pint of spirits of wine;

then dissolve 4 oz of hard white Spanish soap, scraped thin in 4 oz of oil of rosemary. It may be improved by adding 2 oz of ammonia, tincture of aconite, or opium 1 oz and a little oil. It is a good application for sprains, lumbago, pained limbs, weakness of joints, etc. Mixed with tincture of cantharides, or tincture of cayenne, it becomes more effectively stimulant.’

- 7 Henry Thomas Austen was born on 8 June 1771, and his elder brothers were James (1765), George (1766) and Edward (1767).
- 8 Jane Cooper, 1771-98.
- 9 Cassandra Elizabeth Austen, born 9 January 1773.
- 10 As a parson’s wife, Mrs Austen has a Biblical reference handy: II Kings 20, vv 13-15, also Isaiah 39, vv 2-4.
- 11 Sir George Hampson, 6th bt. (died 1774), was a maternal cousin of the Walters and Austens.
- 12 Francis William Austen was born 23 April 1774.
- 13 John Cope Freeman (died 1788) was another cousin on the Hampson side; the ‘little orphans’ referred to here are unidentified.
- 14 Henry Thomas Cope Freeman predeceased his father, dying in 1776.

What happened to George Hatton and Mr J W?

Margaret Wilson

It is well known that Jane Austen wrote five letters to her favourite niece, Fanny Knight (daughter of her brother Edward), giving advice about her niece's love life.¹ The gentlemen who were courting Fanny were Mr John Plumptre in 1814 and Mr James Wildman in 1817. Jane also occasionally mentioned a Mr George Hatton and it is less well known that Fanny also regarded him as a possible beau. In fact Fanny did not marry any of these men. Three years after her aunt Jane died, she married Sir Edward Knatchbull, a widower with six children. In an earlier article I described what happened to Mr Plumptre, indicating that his subsequent life and activities showed that he would not have been a suitable match for Fanny and that she was wise in rejecting his advances.² I now turn to Mr Hatton and Mr Wildman, both of whom Jane met, and both of whom had some interesting aspects to their lives.

George William Finch Hatton (1791-1858) was the eldest son of George Finch Hatton (1747-1823) who lived at Eastwell Park near Ashford. His portrait in the National Portrait Gallery by Henry Robinson, after Thomas Phillips, shows him to be a well-built, black-haired man and an impressive figure – he was said to be an inspiring speaker.

Eastwell Park was a new house built for George's father in 1799 by Joseph Bonomi, an Italian architect invited to England by the Adam brothers. Although it was meant to be classical in style, it defied the accepted rules. Jane Austen mentions Bonomi in *Sense and Sensibility* when Robert Ferrars, who has pretensions to know about architecture, shows his contempt for him when he is asked his opinion of three plans done by the architect; he throws them all into the fire as worthless.³ It has been inferred from this that Jane Austen did not respect Bonomi. She certainly knew the architecture of Eastwell as she visited it while staying with her brother Edward Knight and his wife at nearby Godmersham Park. Eastwell's parkland is mentioned by Fanny's son Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen in his children's book *Higgledy-Piggledy* (1875) as having 'grand trees and spacious woods'.⁴

Jane first mentioned a visit to the house in August 1805. She made some comments about the Finch Hatton family in a letter to Cassandra: 'they were very civil to me as they always are', showing that she was used to seeing them. 'I have discovered,' she continued, 'that Ly [Lady] Elizth [Elizabeth] for a woman of her age and situation, has astonishingly little to say for herself, and that Miss Hatton [Louisa] has not much more. – Her eloquence lies in her fingers; they were most fluently harmonious.' Her impression of the fourteen-year-old George was that he was 'a fine boy, and well behaved'; and she was even more impressed by his ten-year-old brother Daniel 'who chiefly delighted me; the good humour of his countenance is quite bewitching'.⁵

The lack of vitality among the females of the family did not improve with time. In November 1813 when Jane was staying at Godmersham, she reported to Cassandra on a visit by Lady Elizabeth Hatton and another daughter Anna Maria: ‘Yes, they called, but I do not think I can say anything more about them. They came & they sat & they went.’⁶

In 1810 Jane’s niece Fanny mentioned contact with various members of the Hatton family, including George (now 19) who had ridden from Eastwell to dine with her family. In the following year not only the Hattons but also the Wildmans joined the Knights for the usual New Year festivities; coming in the evening they ‘had a most delightful Ball and supper’. By April George Hatton had become a subject of interest to 17-year-old Fanny and her friends; she wrote about him in code in her diary, using astronomical terms to describe him like ‘Jupiter’ or the ‘Planet’. On 29 May she wrote in her diary: ‘I think this is G H’s birthday. Heav’n smile propitious on his days!!!!’ Fanny’s Aunt Cassandra became aware of this and evidently thought the subject was getting out of hand, for on 12 June Fanny received ‘A lecture from aunt Cassandra on *Astronomy*’. On 13 September Fanny wrote regretfully, ‘G Hatton dined here but went away so early’. Any adolescent passion was beginning to abate.⁷

After a gap of three years Jane wrote to Cassandra from Godmersham in September 1813: ‘We hear a great deal of George Hatton’s wretchedness, I suppose he has quick feelings – but I daresay they will not kill him. – He is so much out of spirits however that his friend John Plumptre is gone over to comfort him, at Mr Hatton’s desire.’⁸ Mr Hatton was probably thwarted in love. Fanny’s son Edward Knatchbull Hugessen (1st Lord Brabourne) bore this out when he wrote in 1884, in his notes to *Letters of Jane Austen*: ‘I remember hearing from my mother that the gentleman here referred to had “a great disappointment” in early life, but who the lady was and whether this was the ‘wretchedness’ I cannot say. Perhaps it had nothing to do with love, and was only caused by the death of his great-aunt, Lady Charlotte Finche (née Fermor) who died in June 1813. But I am bound to say that I have a letter before me which says, “all the young ladies were in love with George Hatton – he was very handsome and agreeable, danced very well, and flirted famously”’.⁹ Jane followed her remark up with another on 15 October: ‘There is no truth in the report of G Hatton being to marry Miss Wemyss. He desires it may be contradicted.’¹⁰ Maybe this was the lady on whom he had placed his hopes; unfortunately we know nothing about her except that her name indicates that she was probably Scottish.

On 25 October George Hatton paid a visit to Godmersham and Fanny’s reaction was completely calm. This was Aunt Jane’s first encounter with him and she wrote her impression of him: ‘George Hatton called yesterday – & I saw him – saw him for 10 minutes – sat in the same room with him – heard him talk – saw him Bow – & was not in raptures. – I discerned nothing extraordinary. – I should speak of him as a Gentlemanlike young Man – eh! bien tout est dit.’¹¹ The hitherto exciting young man was now seen by both Fanny and her aunt in a much duller light.

By February 1814 Fanny recorded in a matter-of-fact tone that George Hatton was one of her partners at an Ashford ball. In March she spent some time with Aunt Jane at her uncle Henry's house in London; Jane records how 'Fanny and I went into the Park yesterday . . . Messrs J Plumtre & J Wildman called while we were out; and we had a glimpse of them both & of G Hatton too in the Park'.¹² Fanny's interest in Mr Hatton now seems to be negligible; it had never been more than a one-sided, girlish infatuation. John Plumtre had become the focus of her attention and this turned out to be a more serious relationship.

Meanwhile, George Hatton himself was still looking for a wife, and it was not long before he found one. Fanny's diary in June stated: 'The intended marriage of George Hatton and Lady Charlotte Grahame announced.' It took place on 26 July. Charlotte was the eldest daughter of the third Duke of Montrose. Four days later Fanny recorded seeing 'the bride and bridegroom pass to Eastwell in proper state!' and on 7 August she met them: 'George H and bride called; Lady Charlotte is a sweet little perfection.'

After Mr Hatton's marriage all contact was not lost and Fanny continued to mention occasional visits to Eastwell. She went there in 1816 and 1818, as did members of her extended family, notably her cousins Fanny and Sophia Cage and her aunt Louisa Bridges, all of whom lived at Goodnestone. As a married man Mr Hatton continued to reside at Eastwell but, after the death of his father's cousin the 9th Earl of Winchilsea in 1826, he inherited not only the title (his own father having already died) but also the family seat, Haverholme Priory in Lincolnshire.

George Hatton's main activity was that of a politician. He was a Tory and strong supporter of the Protestant cause, particularly in Northern Ireland. This issue became important when in 1829 the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, brought forward the Catholic Relief Bill, which allowed Roman Catholics to hold positions in government. Hatton resisted the change so vehemently that the Duke demanded an apology and then satisfaction, resulting in a duel. Since duelling had been forbidden, the event took place in great secrecy; in fact it was something of a charade as both men fired to miss. The Earl eventually apologised.

George's first wife bore him two children, George and Caroline, but his private life was saddened by her death in 1835. He soon remarried, his second wife being Emily Bagot. She bore him no children and was said to be a kleptomaniac, spending much of her time in Haverholme, a bleak and cheerless spot.¹³ She died aged 39 and was buried in Lincolnshire but was also commemorated at Eastwell by a sculpture, known as the 'White Lady' Memorial, by Lawrence McDonald. Originally in a vault in the church, it is now on display in the new Hintze Gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum, since the church became a ruin in 1951. The inscription on the memorial was written by the lady herself and indicates her unhappy life. As she suffered from a mental illness and lived in such a remote location, its sentiments are predictably sad.

George Hatton had now reached the age of 57 and had only one son and heir. In seeking a third wife he chose Fanny Margaretta Rice, the thirty-year-old

daughter of Lizzie Rice, Fanny Knight's sister, and also a great-niece of Jane Austen. It may have seemed strange to Fanny Knight that her former heart-throb should be marrying her own niece. Although George and his new wife's family had different political views, the match turned out to be a happy one. Fanny Margaretta produced three sons and a daughter during her nine years of marriage before her husband died in 1858. Lord Brabourne wrote glowingly of him: 'those who in later life knew the warm-hearted generosity of his nature, the sterling worth of his character and excellence of his disposition, will not be surprised to hear of that general popularity in youth which he undoubtedly enjoyed.'¹⁴

The fate of Eastwell Park after George Hatton's death is interesting as it had another connection with Jane's great-nephew Lord Brabourne. In 1874 the house was rented out for 12 years to the Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria, and his Russian wife Marie, daughter of Tsar Alexander II. Lord Brabourne was a near neighbour, living in the village of Smeeth; he records joining a shooting party with the Duke. In the twentieth century Eastwell was replaced by a modern building, in mock Tudor style, and survives now as a hotel.

George Hatton's widow, Fanny, survived her husband for 50 years and outlived two of her sons. Towards the end of her life she lived in a house in Sevenoaks, called appropriately Hatton, which later became the local secondary school for girls and is now a centre for adult education.

During 1814 Fanny's attachment to Mr John Plumptre became what she described as a tacit engagement. However, by the end that year she had decided not to encourage him any more and his place as a suitor was taken by James Wildman of Chilham Castle.

James Beckford Wildman was named after his eccentric godfather William Beckford of Fonthill, the famous art collector and inheritor of the greatest sugar fortune in the West Indies. His own father, also James, together with his uncles Thomas and Henry, managed Beckford's sugar plantation affairs. In 1770 the eldest brother Thomas was made a member of the council who managed Beckford's huge fortune. James was the agent on the ground in Jamaica, and Henry supervised the West Indian merchants in London. Their work was unchecked for years, a situation which led to abuse and selfish gain. On one occasion they duped Beckford into selling them one of his plantations at a fraction of its true value. This economic blow, together with other factors like the fluctuations in the sugar trade and his own extravagance, combined to cripple Beckford's finances.¹⁵

James Wildman senior had acquired enough money by 1794 to buy Chilham Castle in Kent for his family. He had married Joanna Harper and already had several children of whom James Beckford was the eldest son, born in 1790. Young James was educated at Winchester and Christ Church Oxford, where he took his BA in 1812. He then studied at Lincolns Inn. His home in Kent was next door to the estate of Jane's brother Edward at Godmersham, and Jane mentions meeting the Wildman family as early as 1801 when they gave a ball. With her brother Edward and his wife, she dined at Chilham in August 1805. In October 1813 Mrs Wildman and her daughter visited Godmersham when Jane was staying

and the following month Jane's niece Fanny and a 'Miss Wildman' entertained everyone at the piano. James was then twenty-five; Jane refers to him being close by and pretending to listen.¹⁶

In February and March 1814 Fanny and her father visited Bath, where her maternal grandmother Lady Bridges was staying. The Wildmans were also there and the two families socialised. At the end of that year Fanny had stopped encouraging Mr Plumptre, while the Wildmans continued to appear in her diary. James was her partner at a Canterbury ball in January 1816 and a dinner guest in September. In that year James's father died and he inherited the family estate; his father was commemorated by a handsome memorial by the sculptor Francis Chantrey in Chilham Church. In 1817 Mr Wildman's attention had increased so much that Fanny sought her aunt's advice again. Jane's replies have become, like her comments on Mr Plumptre, well-known for their wisdom and common sense, which could be applied to any adolescent girl struggling with her affairs of the heart.

A letter which Jane wrote to Fanny in February of that year is full of such lively comment and appreciation that it is clear that Jane enjoyed reading what she calls the 'thorough pictures' of her niece's heart. In giving advice she wrote: 'Mr J W frightens me. – He will have you. – I see you at the Altar . . . do not imagine that I have any real objection, I have rather taken a fancy to him than not, and I like Chilham Castle for you.' But she had some reservations about Mr Wildman as a future husband for her niece and in a further letter Jane reassured Fanny about her marriage prospects, urging her to be patient: 'depend upon it, the right Man will come at last'. When Fanny went on to lend Mr Wildman copies of her aunt's novels without revealing their authorship, Jane scolded her for being unfair. This was probably one of the last letters Jane ever wrote.¹⁷

With Aunt Jane's death in July 1817, Fanny was left alone to sort out her feelings about Mr J W. During the autumn he partnered her at a ball and continued to visit. Fanny's diary in October of the following year, just after her sister Lizzie's wedding, shows Mr J W still visiting and dining at Godmersham on five occasions within a month. His presence at the Twelfth Night celebrations on 6 January 1819 – normally very much a family occasion – was recalled by Fanny in a letter she wrote later in the year to her cousin and confidante Fanny Cage. She described an anecdote about James, who had been her 'savage Consort' at the party when she was Queen of the Revels. She assured her cousin that he would never be her wife in reality even though he began 'sighing at me most manfully the other day . . . I know by experience it will not last long and I have no intention of fanning the flame.'¹⁸ By this time, November 1819, Fanny had herself decided that Mr Wildman was not for her.

Interestingly, only a month earlier, James Wildman was writing a letter to the man who would soon become Fanny's husband, Sir Edward Knatchbull, 9th baronet, whose father had died on 21 September, leaving him to succeed to the estate, title and parliamentary seat. James himself was already an MP for Colchester; in a letter written on 8 October he addressed Sir Edward on his first

parliamentary candidature for the county, writing ‘you shall be heartily welcome to all the support I can give you and sincerely hope you will succeed without opposition’.¹⁹



Memorial to James Wildman by Sir Francis Chantrey in Chilham Church, and to his son, James Beckford Wildman

James did not linger over choosing a wife once Fanny had indicated that she was not interested. In early October 1820, just over a fortnight before Fanny's own wedding to Sir Edward Knatchbull, James Wildman was married in Canterbury Cathedral to Mary Ann Lushington, daughter of Stephen Rumbold Lushington, MP for Canterbury, and a grand-daughter of the first Lord Harris. James continued to sit as an MP until 1826. He and his wife had 10 children; two sons grew to maturity while two others died in infancy as did one of their six sisters. Chilham Castle was an ideal home for such a large brood, and James's concern for the village extended to an interest in the school and even some provision for evening adult education for men.

But James Wildman could not ignore the basis for his family's wealth, the Jamaican sugar plantations. Although the slave trade was abolished in 1807,

the law did not have immediate effect on the existing labour force in the West Indies. In England the efforts of the abolitionists increased, since nothing but total disappearance of slavery would satisfy them. 'A Report from a Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery throughout the British Dominions' was produced in 1833 and included an account of the examination of James Beckford Wildman in which he answered questions about the state of the 640 slaves on his Jamaican estates. He said that he arranged for the slaves to have religious instruction and was satisfied that their moral behaviour improved in consequence and that the slaves welcomed this. He substituted reason, kindness and personal influence for the whip as a stimulus to labour, reserving corporal punishment only for crimes.²⁰ The younger James Wildman had a totally different moral attitude to slaves from that of his father and William Beckford.

When the Slavery Abolition Act was passed in 1833, all slaves in British colonies were given their freedom and compensation paid to the owners. Fluctuation in sugar prices and the wars in France had already affected the previously prosperous British traders. James Beckford Wildman, like other plantation owners, found it difficult to manage his estates once he no longer had a cheap labour force. According to a note in Deirdre Le Faye's entry for James Beckford Wildman in the Biographical Index to *Jane Austen's Letters*, James failed miserably in his financial affairs, as a result of some over-generous bequests and 'mortgages raised to provide funds to work the family estates in the West Indies by machinery after the emancipation of slaves'.²¹ In consequence the family home at Chilham, bought by his father in 1794, was sold in 1861 to pay his debts. James spent his last days in slightly less grand accommodation at Yotes Court in Mereworth, dying there in 1867.

There is one further reason why Jane Austen would have been aware of the Beckford connection. When Jane, her mother and sister were living at Chawton Cottage, their neighbours in Chawton House, tenants of her brother Edward from 1808 to 1813, were the Middleton family. John Middleton had married William Beckford's first cousin Charlotte and after her death in 1803, her sister Maria took her place as housekeeper. Jane came to know Maria Beckford well and in 1811 she wrote a poem about the lady having a headache.²² Maria was another reminder of the 'larger than life' William Beckford, whose godson had entered and enlivened Jane's life.

Notes

- 1 The five letters are in Deirdre Le Faye's edition of *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford, 1995): No. 109, 18-20 Nov. 1814, p. 278; No. 114, 30 Nov. 1814, p. 285; No. 151, 20-21 Feb. 1817, pp. 328-29; No. 153, 13 March 1817, p. 332; No. 155, 23-25 March 1817, p. 335.
- 2 My article 'What happened to Mr J P?' appeared in the *Annual Report of the Jane Austen Society* for 1993.
- 3 Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 252
- 4 Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen (later Lord Brabourne), *Higgledy-Piggledy*

- (Longmans, 1875) in the story 'The Crones of Charing', p. 53.
- 5 *Letters*, No. 45, 24 Aug. 1805, p. 107.
 - 6 *Letters*, No. 96, 7 Nov. 1813, p. 253.
 - 7 Fanny Knight's diaries, Knatchbull family papers, catalogue mark U951 F 24/1-69. I am grateful to the Centre for Kentish Studies for allowing me to quote from these papers.
 - 8 *Letters*, No. 89, 24 Sept. 1813, p. 226.
 - 9 Lord Brabourne, ed., *Letters of Jane Austen* vol. II (Bentley, 1884), p. 124.
 - 10 *Letters*, No. 92, 15 Oct. 1813, p. 239.
 - 11 *Letters*, No. 94, 26 Oct. 1813, p. 245.
 - 12 *Letters*, No. 98, 8 Mar. 1814, p. 259.
 - 13 Lord Halifax, *Ghost Stories* (Bles, 1936) included one entitled 'The Footsteps at Haverholme Priory'.
 - 14 See Note 9,
 - 15 Boyd Alexander, *England's Wealthiest Son: a study of William Beckford* (Centaaur, 1962).
 - 16 *Letters*, No. 30, 8-9 Jan. 1801, p. 69; No. 45, 24 Aug. 1805, p. 106; No. 92, 14-15 Oct. 1813, p. 239; No. 96, 6-7 Nov. 1813, p. 251.
 - 17 *Letters*, No. 151, No. 153, No. 155 (see Note 1 for details).
 - 18 Letter from Fanny Knight to Fanny Cage, Nov 5 1819, quoted in M. C. Hammond, *Relating to Jane* (Minerva Press, 1998), pp. 232-33.
 - 19 Knatchbull family papers. Catalogue number U951 C4/6 . Letter from James Wildman to Sir Edward Knatchbull, 8 Oct. 1819.
 - 20 *A Report from a Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery throughout the British Dominions* (London, 1833), pp. 485-87.
 - 21 *Letters*, p. 587
 - 22 Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2004), pp.198-99.

*'The labour of the novelist': Jane Austen,
Work and Writing*

Jennie Batchelor

The quotation that provides the title for this essay¹ appears in *Northanger Abbey* (published 1817, dated 1818) as part of the famous defence of the novel that comprises much of chapter 5. Here it is in context:

Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers. And while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England, or the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens, – there seems almost a general wish of decrying their capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them. [...] 'It is only Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda;' or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.²

The contemporary significance of Jane Austen's vindication of the novel and the 'explosive power' of her critique of the genre's detractors have long been recognised in critical commentary on *Northanger Abbey*.³ However, the central role that the vocabulary of labour plays within the vindication and its associated critique has not formed part of these discussions. Having recently completed a book-length study on representations of various kinds of work (from dressmaking and childrearing to writing) in female-authored eighteenth-century novels, I find Jane Austen's pointed reference to the underrated 'labour of the novelist' hard to ignore.⁴ 'Labour' was rarely a casual or innocent term when it appeared in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fiction, especially when it appeared in the context of discussions of authorship, and more especially still when it appeared in the work of women writers. To talk about labour in the context of writing was, as I hope to demonstrate, to enter into a debate about 'the work of writing': that is

to say, what kind of work writing was; what it could achieve; and who could and should perform it.⁵ By the late 1790s, when *Northanger Abbey* was first conceived as *Susan*, this debate had become an urgently contested topic, which occupied column after column in contemporary periodicals and literary reviews and came to vex even the most successful of writers, particularly those of the middling and genteel ranks who, towards the eighteenth century's close, were increasingly deemed unfit for labour of any kind. By the early nineteenth century, it was becoming clear that this was a debate which was to have important consequences for the fate and posthumous reputations of a number of women writers, Jane Austen included. Reading *Northanger Abbey* alongside the works of other women writers such as Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth (the authors of *Cecilia*, *Camilla* and *Belinda*), Charlotte Smith and the host of authors responsible for the groaning of the circulating library shelves, profitably refocuses our attention to this well-known passage and Jane Austen's attitudes to authorship more broadly. In this context, chapter 5 of the novel seems less exclusively a vindication of *the novel* – although it certainly is that – but also, and just as importantly, a claim for *female authorship*: that is, for the significant, but increasingly 'undervalu[ed]' intellectual labour that women writers were expending in a literary marketplace that had become ever more professionalised and openly hostile to the productions of the female pen in the years since Jane Austen first took it up as a girl. In this changing climate, women writers were, indeed, becoming an 'injured body'.

This is not to overstate the difficulties that women novelists faced in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary marketplace. Burney and Edgeworth were financially successful and very popular, of course, and were often well reviewed, although the notices for *Belinda* (1801) were mixed to say the least, and Burney's last novel, *The Wanderer* (1814), was a critical failure.⁶ Neither is it my intention to present Jane Austen as an embattled figure who used her novels as a way of showing just how 'M.A.D.' (to use the penname by which the author of *Northanger Abbey* once went) was the world of publishers, publishing and reviewers.⁷ Nonetheless, I want to suggest that in *Northanger Abbey*, and elsewhere in her work, there is evidence that Jane Austen was not only aware of, but also that she was an informed contributor to, the intimately connected debates about women's work and the work of writing in which Burney and Edgeworth also participated, and, moreover, that she was highly critical of literature's professionalisation at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Labour in Jane Austen's novels

Before turning to Jane Austen's contribution to contemporary debates surrounding the work of writing, I want first to focus on work in the writing. In many ways, work is not an obvious topic to consider in relation to Jane Austen's novels, or indeed those of many of her immediate predecessors and contemporaries. A number of historians of the eighteenth-century novel have argued that the world of work and the world of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novel are poles apart and that detailed engagements with the plight of the labouring

classes, or meaningful explorations of the psychology of labour, rarely exist before industrial and 'condition of England' novels.⁸ There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740). Yet *Pamela* seems notable primarily because of its singularity – few eighteenth-century novelists were as bold as Richardson in allowing a labouring-class heroine to narrate her own story, after all. In almost every other way, *Pamela*'s treatment of labour seems deeply conservative: Pamela is rarely seen *at work* in the novel that bears her name and is ultimately delivered from a life of labour when she marries Mr B.

If a meaningful engagement with labour is scarce in male-authored fiction of the period, it has been deemed scarcer still in female-authored novels published before the 1830s. Edward Copeland has gone so far as to argue that the act of seeking employment for a fictional heroine 'turn[ed] the ideology of the genteel novel upside down', because it betrayed the heroine's class and placed her virtue in considerable doubt. Furthermore, he contends, such plotlines threatened the moral authority of the heroine's female creator. By drawing attention to work, and by association to the economic imperatives that drove a number of female authors to put pen to paper, women writers seemed to put their intellectual endeavours in an uncomfortably close proximity to the degraded world of manual labour. The consequence was that their professional status as writers and their private reputations as women could be called into question.⁹ We need only recall James Edward Austen-Leigh's commentary on *The Watsons* (composed 1804) to see the pertinence of Copeland's claims. Austen-Leigh, writing in the second edition of *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (1871), proffered the view that his aunt ceased working on the manuscript because she became aware of 'the evil of having placed her heroine too low, in such a position of poverty and obscurity as, though not necessarily connected with vulgarity, has a sad tendency to degenerate into it'.¹⁰ Austen-Leigh seems to be responding here, not only to Emma Watson's compromised social standing, but to the determination with which she approaches the possibility of having to make a virtue of necessity and labour for her support when faced with the less appealing alternative of a mercenary marriage. As she explains to her somewhat incredulous sister Elizabeth, 'I would rather be Teacher at a school (and I can think of nothing worse) than marry a Man I did not like'.¹¹ In the eyes of Austen-Leigh, such comments were 'unfavourable' to the heroine and her author. At some point, Jane Austen must have realised this and, determining that such errors should 'never [be] repeated', she put down the manuscript never to complete it.¹²

Yet, if it is true that discussing work was potentially risky for women writers, as Copeland contends and Austen-Leigh implies, it is simply misleading to assume that they did not do so. As I have argued elsewhere, female workers are ubiquitous in novels by the likes of Sarah Fielding, Sarah Scott, Fanny Burney, Charlotte Lennox, Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson and Mary Wollstonecraft. Moreover, when faced with a loss of financial security or an undesirable mercenary marriage, many of these characters face the prospect of supporting themselves by their labour not with sentimental distress, but with steely determination.¹³ If it is true

that work is much more prevalent in eighteenth-century novels by women than we had once thought, where does this leave Jane Austen? Is there not a case for reconsidering her longstanding association with the leisured classes? In a number of ways, this case has already been made. As David Selwyn has demonstrated, such characterisations of Jane Austen's fictional world are deceptive: characters in her novels are rarely inactive, after all, with many running estates or households and raising children, while those who are of a more idle persuasion (such as Lady Bertram) are commonly objects of satire.¹⁴ I would add that Jane Austen's association with leisure is misleading in at least one further sense, in that it distorts the representation of work where it *does* exist in her fiction. My contention is that the prevalence of discussions surrounding the nature, value and status of women's work in other fictional and non-fictional texts of the period means that when Jane Austen engages with such issues, she can do so with such economy that it is easy for the modern reader – less versed in these debates than she and her readers would have been – to overlook such passages and underestimate their significance. Take, for example, the case of Jane Fairfax, faced with the unenviable prospect of trafficking her accomplishments in 'Offices for the sale – not quite of human flesh – but of the human intellect'.¹⁵ Taken out of their immediate context, Jane's words would not seem out of place in the radical writings of Mary Hays, Mary Ann Radcliffe or Mary Wollstonecraft. Neither would they seem out of place in many of the more polemical magazine articles on the subject of governessing, which appeared with regularity in the early nineteenth century. To talk about governessing in the way that Jane Fairfax does – that is, to do so by implicitly raising the spectres of slavery and prostitution – is self-consciously to position the text within the context of wider feminist debates about the governess and the plight of the genteel woman forced to market her accomplishments for her support.¹⁶ Recognition of this fact complicates any straightforward reading of the novel's treatment of Jane Fairfax as an exploration of the stigma attached to women's work for women of a certain station.

Nancy Armstrong has demonstrated that the principal reason why the governess provoked such acute cultural anxiety in the early nineteenth century was that her 'fulfilling the duties of the domestic woman for money [...] blurred a distinction on which the very notion of gender appeared to depend. She seemed to call into question an absolutely rigid distinction between domestic duty and labour that was performed for money, a distinction so deeply engraved upon the public mind that the figure of the prostitute could be freely invoked to describe any woman who dared to labour for money'.¹⁷ Jane Fairfax's likening of '[o]ffices for the sale' of 'human flesh' and 'human intellect' seems to illustrate Nancy Armstrong's point nicely, but only if we read the character's comments in isolation from the much more radical sentiments Jane Austen is implicitly evoking when she allows Jane to make the comparison. Indeed, being a domestic woman for Jane Fairfax, as for the heroines of Mary Wollstonecraft's and Mary Hays's novels, is not a particularly appealing alternative to governessing and offers scant opportunities to exercise her considerable intellect. After all, Jane Fairfax's husband will be Frank

Churchill. What is most unenviable about Jane's situation is not that she must find work and endure a loss of status (a fate from which she is serendipitously rescued by Mrs Churchill's death); rather it is the recognition that neither work nor marriage allows her fully to achieve her intellectual potential.¹⁸ In *Emma* (1816), marriage is not the solution to the problem of female dependence as it is in later governess novels such as *Jane Eyre* (1847). Jane Fairfax's story is not going to end with a triumphalist 'Reader, I married him!'¹⁹ Indeed, if Jane Fairfax were allowed to speak at the novel's close, she might agree with the words of Wollstonecraft's eponymous woman of genius Mary, that the world would be a better place without 'marrying' or 'giving in marriage'.²⁰ Jane Fairfax's situation, like that of many of the women who appear in the governess debates of the period, reveals that the labour market and the marriage markets are equally driven by economic forces. Because each demands that women work, sometimes in spite of themselves and their accomplishments, neither is a wholly satisfactory option for the truly accomplished.

The work of writing

If we are not used to seeing Jane Austen as a contributor to contemporary debates about women's work, then neither are we used to seeing her as participating in debates about the work of writing. Despite important work by Jan Fergus, Claire Harman and Kathryn Sutherland, there remain various barriers to seeing Jane Austen as a writer both committed to authorship as a profession and preoccupied with questions about the function and status of writing in a changing literary marketplace.²¹ In part, this is because 'labour' – a term which, as we will see, was so central to the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century debates about authorship – is not a word that we readily associate with Jane Austen's writing life. Indeed, the history of Austen criticism suggests a concerted effort to write labour out of accounts of the novelist's biography and career. According to Austen-Leigh, for example, writing was not work for Jane Austen; it was an 'amusement' that could be taken up or put down at will. His aunt lived 'in entire seclusion from the literary world' and was above its mercenary concerns: 'money, though acceptable,' was not the object of her writing.²² (We must conveniently forget, here, Jane Austen's professed liking for 'Pewter' as much as 'praise'.)²³ In the minds of her earliest biographers, Jane Austen's orientation was towards the domestic (the appropriately feminine and socially respectable world of leisure), rather than towards the professional. She was adept with her pen, but only as adept as she was at 'throwing spilikins' or performing 'plain or ornamental' needlework. In the words of Austen-Leigh she was 'successful in everything that she attempted with her fingers', writing being just one of the uses to which these accomplished digits were put.²⁴

Jane Austen did much to perpetuate such perceptions of her attitudes towards authorship, of course. References in the correspondence to novels read and written by Jane Austen are often buried within discussions of petticoats, apple pies and domestic tribulations. (Anyone who has suffered from writer's block

will sympathise with the letter in which the author laments that her 'Ideas' don't 'flow as fast as the rain in the Storecloset'.²⁵ That Jane Austen consistently located her writing within the home does not signify that she saw authorship as a leisured accomplishment or mere amusement, however. Neither does it prove that she was disengaged from the pressing contemporary debates about the work of writing to which so many of her contemporaries were also contributors. As she repeatedly indicated in her letters and in the passage from *Northanger Abbey* with which I opened this essay, novel-writing demanded commitment, dedication and professionalism and, as such, it was work that demanded respect. Novels were not to be dashed off in a few months, as was Sidney Owenson's *Ida of Athens*, which was given suitably short shrift in a letter Jane wrote to Cassandra in mid-January 1809.²⁶ Works of fiction were to be laboured on diligently over a sustained period of time. To do so required high standards of professionalism, higher, in fact, for women than for their male counterparts precisely because women had to negotiate a professional life without neglecting their domestic responsibilities. As she humorously wrote in a letter to Cassandra, the professional and the domestic did not always sit well together for the female author: 'Composition seems to me Impossible, with a head full of Joints of Mutton & doses of Rhubarb'.²⁷ Recognition of the competing pressures faced by women writers prompted Jane Austen's grudging respect even for authors such as Jane West, of whose 'hard words' she was no particular enthusiast. That West should produce 'such books', she wrote in a letter of September 1816, with 'all her family cares', was 'a matter of astonishment' indeed.²⁸

The nature and prevalence of such comments in the correspondence, coupled with the (not always patient) determination that Jane Austen displayed throughout her writing career, makes it tempting to agree with Claire Harman that Jane must have possessed a 'powerful work ethic'.²⁹ The problem with such an argument, however, as Harman acknowledges, is that the correspondence gives only a partial account of Jane Austen's working methods and attitudes towards her writing career, just as it provides only an incomplete narrative of her life. Chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey*, I would suggest, fills in some of these gaps by giving the private reflections upon reading, writing and the state of the literary marketplace Jane Austen articulated in the letters a public voice and orientation. I suggested earlier that chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey* is not solely a vindication of the novel, but of the injured female writer. The distinction might appear to be a moot point, yet it was anything but that at the time when Jane Austen was writing and publishing. The period between *Northanger Abbey*'s original composition (in the 1790s) and its publication some twenty years later maps onto the beginning and end of a period that literary scholars and book historians are coming to recognise as a decisive period in the history of authorship. A comprehensive account of the myriad shifts and transformations that occurred in the conceptualisation and practice of authorship between the 1790s and 1820 is the subject of a much longer study. It is perhaps enough to observe, as for example Clifford Siskin and Paul Keen have done, that following decades of unprecedented expansion in the

literary marketplace, the latter decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth saw a period of industrious self-regulation within the world of print, characterised by concerted efforts to professionalise literature, to redefine the modern author as sole creator and intellectual proprietor of his works, and to lay the foundations for the process of canon-formation that would begin in earnest later in the nineteenth century.³⁰ Labour was to prove a key term in, and an important criterion for, these developments. Writers, commentators, and political economists argued with increasing insistence that authors had to live up to the standards of industriousness, rigour, expertise and specialism by which members of other, and particularly the learned, professions were judged if their own occupation was to command respect and cultural authority.³¹ Authorship was valuable only when it performed culturally useful work, although how it might do that was a subject of much uncertainty and considerable debate. According to this new and influential mode of thinking, authors were not, as Adam Smith had controversially claimed in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), ‘unproductive’ members of society, parasitically dependent upon the labours of others.³² On the contrary, and in the words of Smith’s contemporary David Williams, they were ‘the most productive of all the classes of mankind’, ‘direct[ing] the mode of storing and setting in motion future industry’, and regulating the conduct, shortening the labour, and multiplying the comforts, of mankind’.³³

As Jane Austen recognised in chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey*, one of the most pernicious consequences of labour’s new centrality to understandings of professional authorship was the emergence of a new hierarchy of literary labour organised around the categories of genre and gender. The losers, needless to say, were often (although not exclusively) the novel and the many women who chose to work in that genre. One of the most influential upholders of these new standards of literary professionalism was the literary review. The emphasis placed upon work that was considered worthy because it was supposedly useful, usually in a political or economic sense, as opposed to merely ornamental and pleasurable, weighed heavily upon many women writers. Take, as one of a wealth of examples that could make the same point, a review of Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House*, which appeared in the *Critical Review* in the novel’s publication year, 1793. In a crushing, eleven-page assault upon Smith’s influential novel, the reviewer somewhat grudgingly conceded that a ‘well written novel’ might have a ‘legitimate claim to an ascendancy over the human mind’, but then proceeded to list only four authors, none of whom is English, all of whom are male and deceased, who had realised the genre’s potential. Smith’s novel, by contrast, was deemed to represent the worst of novelistic hack work. The book’s length – some ‘*thirteen hundred pages*’ – was a particular bone of contention, prompting the reviewer to ask his readers if it ‘can be wondered at if we *sometimes* yawn, and exclaim in the words of Hotspur, “Oh! it is as tedious as a tired horse or a scolding wife”’.³⁴ Conflating the novel with the authorial body that produced it, the reviewer unflatteringly casts Smith as an old nag, a pesky woman whose work the reviewer deems unworthy of the effort and rather too laboured. The fact that Smith was explicit about her

financial motivations to publish – that writing was her work – is no coincidence.

Read in the context of such reviews, the topicality and political impetus of chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey* is unmistakable. The irony that Jane Austen observes when she writes that the same critic who ‘decree[s]’ the original work of a female novelist might well ‘eulogize’ the merely imitative productions of abridgers and anthologizers is well supported by even the most cursory glance at any of the major reviews of the period, not to mention the many pamphlets and polemics on the subject of the present and future status of literature. In one such polemic, the 1802 *Claims of Literature*, a self-declared manifesto for the important and still-surviving writers’ charity the Literary Fund, David Williams set out a meticulously organised hierarchy of literary works about which Jane Austen would, no doubt, have had much to say. At the top of the literary pecking order, as the most valuable form of intellectual work, according to Williams, are those works of ‘genius’ (i.e. philosophy) which set out to discover ‘unknown regions of science’ and, through the communication of their insights, to contribute to the nation’s ‘common stock of knowledge’.³⁵ To put the words ‘genius’ and ‘novel’ in the same sentence, as Jane Austen does, is unthinkable for Williams. Works of philosophy are followed, on the next rung of the generic ladder, by the works of ‘translators’, who might only purvey borrowed knowledge, but who are nonetheless useful for disseminating it. Below them are the works of ‘compilers’ and anthologizers, principal targets in Jane Austen’s critique in *Northanger Abbey*. Last and by all means least, are novelists or devotees of ‘LITERARY INDOLENCE’, as Williams brands them. The only person worse than a novelist, in Williams’s view, was one whose works were expressly intended to be popular. The Literary Fund’s founder cannot contain his loathing of popular fiction when he turns to the subject of the ‘SICKLY SPAWN [...] of the CIRCULATING LIBRARIES’, which bring the profession of authorship into disrepute.³⁶

Works such as *Claims* add weight to the arguments made by those historians of authorship who have portrayed the close of the eighteenth century as marking an about-turn in the critical fortunes of women writers. In this period, as Clifford Siskin has demonstrated, women writers were increasingly deemed unfit for the rigorous and now implicitly masculine work of intellectual labour and cast as the amateur, leisured other against which the professional man of letters was defined.³⁷ The Great Tradition of British literature, which canonised the likes of Milton, Prior, Addison, Pope and Sterne, was born, and ‘The Great Forgetting’ of women writers began.³⁸ In chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey* Jane Austen not only observes, but also attempts to forestall and condemn these developments. The terms of her defence of the novel and its ‘injured’ creators are uncontroversial today. It seems unproblematic, for example, to associate the novel with originality, genius, wit and taste, and it is surely commonsensical to claim that these qualities are not diminished by the novel’s immense popularity. Moreover, it now seems as fair to condemn the bias of reviewers as it is just to stress the significance of the female novelist’s labour at a time when the currency of that labour was so insistently being valued. As I hope to have demonstrated, however, none of these claims

was commonsensical at the time in which Jane Austen was writing; indeed, each provocatively challenges assumptions that were being taken as read by some of the most influential theorists of, and commentators upon, literature in the period. Inverting the hierarchies of literary labour which would present the novel as one of its lesser forms, Jane Austen was demanding that women's work be taken seriously and that its true merits be acknowledged.

What Jane Austen could not have known when she was drafting and revising *Northanger Abbey* was that she would ride out the storms in the literary marketplace she forecasts, here; her novels would be remembered while those of many others would be consigned for many decades to virtual or total oblivion. By way of conclusion, I would like to consider this irony through the lens of another instance where Jane Austen foregrounds 'the labour of the novelist'. That moment famously occurs in a letter that she wrote to her nephew James Edward, in mid-December 1816, after learning that he had lost two and a half chapters of a novel he was writing while at Steventon. Jane Austen wrote that she could not be suspected of taking them, even if she had been at Steventon at the time, for 'What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited Sketches, full of Variety and Glow?—How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour'.³⁹ The precise meaning of the last sentence of this quotation, in which the labour invested in the creative process is underscored only to be undermined, is typically Austenian in its delightful (perhaps intentional) ambiguity. There are different ways of glossing the sentiment expressed here. One possibility is that Jane Austen is claiming that she works hard to little effect in her writing and, in the process, is styling her artistic aspirations and achievements as humble. This is, of course, precisely the Jane Austen that was replicated in the early biographies, in which the author's work is likened, as Henry Austen likened it, to 'miniature painting', the quintessential beauty of which lies in its delicacy and its modesty of scale and ambition.⁴⁰ A rather different, but plausible and suggestive, reading of the letter would be to gloss her words in the following way: that she labours much precisely *in order to* produce 'little effect' and, thus, to efface the marks of that labour. This slight change of emphasis produces an altogether different meaning. It would indicate, for instance, that Jane Austen conceives of the labour of the woman novelist as the work of concealment. And indeed, for women novelists whose works were, as we have seen, increasingly deemed inferior to the more lofty toil of writers working within other, usually non-fictional genres, making the work of writing invisible might well have been an essential survival strategy, a canny response to the shifts and developments in the literary marketplace this essay has outlined. Reading the letter in this latter way would help to account for the discrepancies that exist between the different versions of Jane Austen we find in accounts of her work from the nineteenth century onwards: Jane Austen the novelist of the home and heart, on the one hand; and Jane Austen the committed literary professional on the other. The '3 or 4 Families in a Country Village' formula may well have just suited her artistic temperament, but it was also a prudent aesthetic choice at

a time when women writers who ventured beyond these more local panoramas (something for which Charlotte Smith was frequently taken to task by reviewers) were often criticised.⁴¹ But, as intimated in the miniature analogy, this apparent smallness of scale can be, and might even have been intended to be, deceptive. For that smallness of scale and slightness of effect can blind us to the intensity of the labour invested in it and the scope of the vision it contains.

It is not a coincidence, I would suggest, that when Jane Austen raises questions about what people see and don't see when looking at aesthetic objects (whether miniatures, as in the letter to James Edward, or novels, as in chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey*) that labour is marked out as our critical blind-spot. In this brisk march through just a fraction of Jane Austen's writing, I hope to have demonstrated both that work is a preoccupation of her fiction and that it is a subject worthy of further consideration. More importantly, though, I hope to have shown that Jane Austen was critically engaged in contemporary debates about women's work and the work of writing. She may have laboured hard to keep this from us, but now it is surely important that we recognise work's presence in her and other women's writing of this period and that we pay due attention to the fact that these authors, Jane Austen included, constituted a provocative presence within cultural debates about the (in)compatibility of domestic and professional life and the cultural and economic devaluing of woman's work (whether governing or novel writing) that shaped the lives of many of her contemporaries and still concern many of us today.

Notes

- 1 This essay originated in a paper I gave at the Jane Austen Society (UK) Conference at the University of Kent in 2009. I would like to thank Patrick Stokes and David Selwyn for inviting me to speak at the conference and for soliciting a version of my talk for the *Annual Report*.
- 2 Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. Barbara Benedict and Deirdre Le Faye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 30-1.
- 3 Claudia L. Johnson, "'Let me Make the Novels of a Country': Barbauld's *The British Novelists* (1810/1820)", *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 34:2 (2001): 163-79.
- 4 Jennie Batchelor, *Women's Work: Labour, Gender and Authorship, 1750-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010). A number of the ideas worked through in the book are revisited in this essay, although Jane Austen is not one of my case studies in the monograph.
- 5 For a fuller account of this debate and its implications for women writers, see Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
- 6 This novel (pointedly not mentioned by Jane Austen) was mauled in a famously

- misogynist review by John Wilson Croker for the *Quarterly Review* of April 1814.
- 7 In a letter from Jane Austen to Richard Crosby, dated 5 April 1809, addressing the publisher's failure to publish *Susan* in the six years since receiving the manuscript, the author signed herself M.A.D., Mrs Ashton Dennis. The letter is reprinted in Deirdre Le Faye's *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 174-5.
 - 8 I am thinking of works such as Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Sandra Sherman's *Imagining Poverty: Quantification and the Decline of Paternalism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001).
 - 9 Edward Copeland, *Women Writing About Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 162.
 - 10 James Edward Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen, to which is added Lady Susan and fragments of two other unfinished tales by Miss Austen*, 2nd edn (London: Richard Bentley, 1871), p. 364.
 - 11 Jane Austen, *The Watsons: A Fragment*, ed. R. W. Chapman (London and Dover [NH], The Athlone Press, 1985), p. 9.
 - 12 Austen-Leigh, p. 364.
 - 13 In my *Women's Work* I approach this matter through a series of case studies on labouring heroines in the works of Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott, Charlotte Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft and a host of popular women writers who were also applicants to the writers' charity, the Royal Literary Fund.
 - 14 David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1999), p. xi; p. xix.
 - 15 Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. Richard Cronin and Dorothy McMillan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 325.
 - 16 Of the many studies devoted to the figure of the governess in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I would particularly recommend Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* and Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).
 - 17 Armstrong, p. 79.
 - 18 A parallel argument about the 'social problem[s]' raised by Jane Fairfax's situation and Austen's 'discomfort' with Jane's choices is made in Lynda A. Hall's 'Jane Fairfax's Choice: The Sale of Human Flesh or Human Intellect', *Persuasions On-Line*, 28:1 (2007) [<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol28no1/hall.htm>].
 - 19 On *Jane Eyre*'s indebtedness to *Emma*, see Jocelyn Harris, 'Jane Austen, Jane Fairfax, and Jane Eyre', *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Society Journal*, 29 (2007): 99-109.
 - 20 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Mary*, in *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman*, ed. Gary Kelly (Oxford: World's Classics, 1998), p. 68.

- 21 Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Claire Harman, *Jane's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World* (London: Canongate, 2009); and Kathryn Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 22 James Edward Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, reprinted in *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 106; p. 90; p. 106.
- 23 Jane Austen to Fanny Knight, 30 November 1814, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 287.
- 24 Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland, p. 77.
- 25 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 24 January 1809, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 169.
- 26 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 17-18 January 1809, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 166.
- 27 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 8-9 Sept 1816, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 321.
- 28 Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 8-9 Sept 1816, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 321.
- 29 Harman, p. 41.
- 30 Siskin. See also Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations, Books I-III*, ed. Andrew S. Skinner (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 431.
- 33 David Williams, *Claims of Literature: The Origin, Motives, Objects, and Transactions, of the Society for the Establishment of a Literary Fund* (London: William Miller and W. Bulmer, 1802), pp. 22-3.
- 34 *Critical Review*, 8 (1793): 44-54.
- 35 Williams, p. 113.
- 36 Williams, pp. 97-98.
- 37 Siskin, p. 222.
- 38 Siskin, p. 218.
- 39 Jane Austen to James Edward Austen, 16-17 December 1816, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 323.
- 40 Henry Austen, *Memoir of Miss Austen*, reprinted in *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, p. 151. Janet Todd offers a fascinating reappraisal of the miniature metaphor in 'Ivory Miniatures and the Art of Jane Austen', in *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics and History*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 76-87.
- 41 Jane Austen to Anna Austen, 9-18 September 1814, *Jane Austen's Letters*, p. 275.

Mrs Austen and Mr Fenton: Housekeeper and Headmaster

Clare Graham

On 29 December 1693, Elizabeth Weller left Chauntlers, her large and comfortable childhood home in Bordyke, Tonbridge, to be married at the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. Her father was a wealthy lawyer from a prestigious and well-established Tonbridge family; her grandfather had been chief Parliamentary Agent for Tonbridge during the Civil War. This young woman was Jane Austen's great-grandmother and it is she and Elijah Fenton, a classical scholar and minor Augustan poet, who are two of the characters in the Austen family chronology whose circumstantial interdependence was to have major implications for the future fortunes of this particular branch of the Kentish Austens.

The man Elizabeth Weller married that winter's day was John Austen of Horsmonden. Unlike her mother's rather grand ancestry with its aristocratic connections, Jane Austen's paternal Kentish forebears made their living from farming and trade and can be reliably traced back six generations to John Austen of Horsmonden, who was born in 1560, and who may for convenience be designated John Austen I. It is possible, with reasonable certainty, to go even further back to William Astyn of Yalding, who died in 1522.¹

The Austen surname with its variants Austin, Astyn and Awsten is probably a derivative of 'Augustine'. The first Archbishop of Canterbury, St Augustine, was often referred to as St Austin and it is quite likely that the Austens took the name when renting farmland from St Augustine's Abbey. The branch of the family from which Jane Austen was descended lived in the Wealden Clay Vale, the low-lying area between the chalk Downs and the sandstones of the High Weald. The word 'weald' comes from the Anglo-Saxon for woodland and until well after the Norman Conquest there were few permanent settlements there. The heavy, sticky clay soils, with their massive oak trees, were difficult to clear for farming and winter waterlogging made the transport of both people and goods virtually impossible. Sir John Norris, a nobleman of Benenden, records in the early 17th century having to yoke six oxen to his carriage in order to get him through the mire to church on a Sunday.² The numerous Wealden place names ending in 'den' give a clue to their origin. A den was a small clearing in the oak woods to which pigs were brought each summer to forage for acorns and beech nuts. The animals often walked long distances to their woodland pastures and were looked after by small communities of swineherds in their forest clearings. The dens were owned by the distant villages and were connected to them by a network of drove roads. Tenterden was the den of the men of Thanet, Biddenden the den of the men of Brabourne. It was these temporary settlements which grew into the large and flourishing villages of the Tudor woollen industry.

Before the time of John Austen I the family were yeoman farmers, countrymen

of respectable standing, owning their own land. But their greatly increased prosperity in the 16th and 17th centuries was founded on the woollen industry. They became clothiers. Daniel Defoe, writing of his travels around the county in the 1720s, records the economic and political importance of the Kentish clothiers, nicknamed the ‘Graycoats of Kent’ because of the characteristic grey-blue colour of their dress: ‘These clothiers ... upon the General Election of Members of Parliament for the County ... are so considerable that whoever they vote for is sure to carry it and therefore the Gentlemen are all very sure to preserve their Interest among them.’³ During the Middle Ages, the English had lacked weaving expertise, so raw wool was exported to the continent and re-imported as finished cloth. In the 16th century many Flemish weavers migrated to England, some of them settling in Kent, where all the necessary raw materials, wool, water, natural dyes and timber, were available in abundance. There was also a workforce willing to be taught fine spinning and weaving skills.

The Austen clothiers lived at Horsmonden, the den of the keepers of horses. Henry VIII owned and leased out two fulling mills beside the ‘broad ford’ over the river Teise on the edge of the village.⁴ Elizabeth I visited the Broadford clothiers, including presumably the Austens, during a Royal Progress through Kent in 1573. John I was then a boy of thirteen. It was his business initiative which made Broadford one of Kent’s most important cloth producing centres. He married Joan Berry of Midley in Romney Marsh, prime sheep country; she died in 1604, giving birth to twins at her eighth confinement, and the family’s wealth and importance are reflected in a handsome memorial brass in Horsmonden church on which she is depicted wearing a tall beaver hat and elegant garments topped by an elaborate ruff. The inscription states, rather poetically, that when dying in childbed she was ‘often uttering these speeches – let nether husband nor children nor lands nor goods separate me from my God’. Her piety is beautifully conveyed in her facial expression (**Plate 10**). Her husband John died in 1620 and the Austen arms is prominent at the head of his ledgerstone. These two worthy and prosperous people were Jane Austen’s four-times-great grandparents. John Austen II inherited the family wealth and property, but on his dying childless it passed to his brother Francis I, who in addition to Broadford acquired the nearby manor house of Grovehurst.

The Austen clothiers were middlemen, entrepreneurs who organised all the stages of cloth production on a cottage industry basis, selling on the finished product, Kentish broadcloth, to the factors in London and on the Continent. A single broadcloth was twenty-eight yards long, one yard wide and weighed a required minimum of eighty-six pounds. It was a heavy cloth, dyed in the wool, that is to say the woollen thread had been dyed before it was woven. The Austens employed a great network of people; shearers, carders, spinners, dyers, weavers and fullers worked in their own homes, bringing the cloth back to Broadford for the final processing. For a substantial part of the year carting was impossible, so the cloth was carried by packhorse to Cranbrook along specially built causeways paved with flagstones, to prevent the horses from sinking into the mud. Here it was

inspected for its quality, covered with protective sacking and officially sealed.

Even at the time of John Austen I's death, production had begun to decline, largely as the result of a growing preference for more fashionable, lighter weight fabrics which were produced more competitively in other parts of the country. The Kentish workforce suffered terrible economic hardship as they gradually lost their livelihood but Francis I and John Austen III continued to prosper by investing in property, farmland and woodland. Timber was needed in huge quantities to meet the insatiable demands of the Wealden iron industry for charcoal to feed the smelters; its value is reflected in John Austen III's will, where he gives careful instructions to his executors to make sure that his woodlands are correctly managed after his death.⁵ The underwoods are to be cut down – that is, any new growth on the forest floor is to be removed, and any decaying wood cleared to ensure the healthy growth of the most valuable trees.

When Elizabeth Weller, now Austen, and her new husband John IV arrived in 1693 to begin their married life in Horsmonden, John III was living at Grovehurst and he installed the couple at Broadford (**Plate 4**). It was a large and comfortable property. An inventory of rooms includes a hall, parlours of varying sizes, bedchambers, a brewhouse, milkhouse, bakehouse, washhouse and best drink cellar. There were also stables and a warehouse for the broadcloth, a kitchen garden and a paddock for the horses. During the first eleven years of marriage, Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth (Betty), followed by six sons, John, Francis (Frank), Thomas, William, Robert (Robin) and Stephen; it was of course William who was Jane Austen's grandfather. Although aware that her husband had built up debts before their marriage, Elizabeth did not know their true magnitude; John had borrowed heavily in the rather insecure expectation, given the prevalence of deadly diseases at the time, of outliving his father and inheriting a large fortune. After their marriage he and his wife had not been particularly extravagant but neither had they saved any money. Elizabeth was, in her own words, 'always uneasy to be in debt', which unfortunately made her husband all the more inclined to keep the true magnitude of what he owed a secret both from her and from his father.

Then disaster struck: John contracted tuberculosis. Throughout the illness, he was constantly anxious over the provision that his father would make for his widow and their children. As Elizabeth wrote, 'He knew his father's temper, and the degree of his meanness, having always found him loath to part with anything'. He got his father's assurance that all the debts would be paid and that it would not be necessary for his widow to sell off any of her possessions to raise money. John died on 21 September 1704, to some extent reassured. What happened next is a tale of unmitigated unpleasantness, indeed sheer malice on the part of his father towards the young widow, whom he must have thoroughly disliked.

Elizabeth's circumstances at the time are known in such detail because of the remarkable survival of two documents now over three hundred years old.⁶ The first is her annual family accounts between 1706 and 1719, entered in an ordinary exercise book, which were required for scrutiny by her husband's executors, brothers-in-law

Stephen Stringer and John Holman. On the first page is inscribed: 'This book is designed for my Yearly Accounts as to my own concerns in all things. How much dispersed, what received, what debts to pay and what substance remains in hand.' The second document is an account of her circumstances entitled 'Memorandums for mine and my children's reading, being my own thou'ts on our affairs 1706, 1707 a rough draft in a retired hour' (**Plate 5**). This is closely written in a well formed and educated hand, with admirable spelling and style. In it she records that when John died, she had no ready money to spend on mourning clothes and, being 'loath to appear ridiculous', she applied to her father-in-law for help. Instead of easing her pain he prevaricated in the manner that was to characterise the rest of his dealings with his daughter-in-law, at the last moment giving her ten pounds. Then, despite the deathbed promises to his son, he demanded that Elizabeth sell off some of her possessions to pay the debts. This whole story was of course well known to Jane Austen and is surely the origin of the scene in *Sense and Sensibility* when Fanny Dashwood so skilfully talks her husband John out of honouring the promises made at his dying father's bedside to ensure that his stepmother and half-sisters would be well looked after financially.

So Elizabeth put up for sale some of her outdoor goods and stock. Then more debts were revealed and yet more money had to be found. Stringer and Holman reminded the old man of his promises at this point. He in turn suggested with cool effrontery that if any of Elizabeth's relations would be willing to put up half the money, he would put up the rest and have the goods made over. The Wellers could certainly have afforded to help and it is something of a mystery as to why they did not. A clue may lie in Elizabeth's response, which was characteristically strong minded and proud; as she records, 'I had no Relation to expect this ffavour from, neither indeed wou'd I desire it of any, for I thou't my ffather Austen had ye greatest obligation of any person, to lay down the money not only for his promise sake, but in all other respects ye greatest obligation to pay his son's debts, ffor all knew he must have many 100 pounds by him.'

Stringer and Holman continued to suggest that Elizabeth's goods should be made over to the old man in exchange for money rather than have her suffer the public humiliation of a sale. He put off the decision again and again, until a date was finally fixed. At the very last moment he called it off and agreed to make over two hundred pounds. It was Elizabeth's opinion that he had never actually intended the sale to go ahead and it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that he just enjoyed making her suffer. The money was sent for but before the transaction could take place, the old man suddenly died, less than a year after his son. There had been no written agreement as to the handover of the two hundred pounds, so Stringer and Holman, who were also the old man's executors, felt unable legally to honour it.

The terms of her father-in-law's will shocked Elizabeth. Her eldest son John was to inherit all the landed property and personal estate at the age of twenty-two. The five younger boys were to receive a mere two hundred pounds each on coming of age providing they relinquished to John any claim on Broadford, £40

apiece towards apprenticeships, and the income of rents from certain properties to be used for their maintenance and education. Betty was assigned £400 at the age of twenty-one but no provision at all was made for her maintenance up to that time. The bitterest blow however was the removal of John from his mother's care to be brought up and educated by his aunts and uncles, the Stringers and the Holmans, in order to make a gentleman of him. Elizabeth could legitimately have appealed against this, but as she wrote 'I had no pockett to know ye opinion of my Lord Chancellor'. John III had thus given minimal acknowledgement to the other children. In Elizabeth's view they were 'most unkindly and unnaturally dealt with', being left, as she saw it, 'as servants'.

So Elizabeth had after all to sell her more valuable goods, some of which she had brought to Broadford as part of her dowry. These included her silver and the bed hangings from the best bed chamber; and to make up the deficit she had also to borrow money on bond. Sufficient capital was raised and she was, at last, free from the burden of her late husband's debts. The family, minus son John, lived on at Broadford for another three years, but as the children grew older the cost of their upkeep increased and the need of an education for the boys became more urgent. In her Memorandum Elizabeth declares: 'It seemed to me as if I cou'd not do a better thing for my children's good, their education being my greatest care ... for I always thou't if they had Learning, they might ye better shift in ye world'. There was no suitable school in Horsmonden, the nearest grammar schools being at Tonbridge and Sevenoaks; her friends advised her to move to one of those towns, sending the boys to school and perhaps renting out some rooms for extra income.

Then came a timely offer of employment which she hoped would save the family fortunes and set her dependent children on course for a prosperous adulthood. The recently appointed Master of Sevenoaks School, or Sennock as it was still called at that time, needed a housekeeper for himself and a matron for his boarders. As part of the terms of her employment Elizabeth would have her sons educated free of charge. A tenant was found for Broadford, at a rent of £36 per annum, and this courageous woman who had been mistress of a large house, living a life of comfort and ease, packed up her possessions, left her marital home and with her troop of six children moved to Sevenoaks to work for the twenty-six year-old bachelor schoolmaster, Elijah Fenton (**Plate 1**).

Fenton had been represented to Elizabeth by her friends as a good Master and, by implication, a good man. Details of his life and character are well recorded. He was born in 1683 into a strongly Jacobite Staffordshire family at Shelton Old Hall, Newcastle under Lyme, and was the youngest of twelve children. His father was a rich attorney with a large estate which had once belonged to John of Gaunt, and his mother's family claimed to be able to trace its lineage back to a captain in the army of William the Conqueror. His social credentials were therefore impeccable.

Fenton was a very clever and studious child and while other boys played games, he was often to be found hiding in an oak tree, reading and preparing his schoolwork.⁷ After grammar school he went up to Jesus College, Cambridge,

where most undergraduates were destined for the Church. However he was a Non-juror. Non-jurors did not accept the legitimacy of any government after 1688 when King James II was deposed, and as he was therefore unable to swear allegiance to the Crown and government, he could not be ordained. Though from a rich family, as a twelfth child he was obliged to earn a living, so he took up what Johnson in *The Lives of the Poets* describes as a 'precarious mode of existence', that of a schoolmaster. His first post was at Headley School near Box Hill under its headmaster Ambrose Bonwicke, another Non-juror; he moved on to Sevenoaks School in 1707.

The school was one of the oldest lay foundations in England, having been endowed in 1432 by William Sennock, a foundling (**Plate 9**). Legend has it that William Rumstead, a gentleman, while riding home through the town in 1373, chanced upon an abandoned infant lying by the roadside.⁸ He took the child home, gave him the name of the town as his surname, and brought him up as his own. Sennock's adult life is well documented. He initially took up an apprenticeship to an ironmonger in London but was soon afterwards admitted to the Grocers' Company. At this time the term grocer denoted a merchant, one who sold 'gross' quantities of great weight, not a small-scale retailer. Sennock owned and hired ships for trading in bulk cargoes, and he rapidly became very wealthy, acquiring land, property, and his own stretch of Thames-side wharf. He was an adviser to Henry IV and a friend of Sir Richard Whittington, and in 1410 followed Whittington to the ultimate office of Lord Mayor. On his death he made a bequest to establish a free Grammar School in the town where his own good fortune had begun. The terms were 'To keep a grammar school and to find and maintain for ever One Master, an honest man, sufficiently instructed in the Science of Grammar, Bachelor of Arts and by no means in Holy Orders, to teach and instruct poor children'. The phrase 'by no means in Holy Orders' has been the subject of some debate; did it mean that the Master must not under any circumstances be in holy orders, or merely that someone not in holy orders was eligible to apply for the post? Whatever its interpretation, and most importantly for the Austen family, Fenton as a Non-juror was eligible for the post. Whether or not Elizabeth was aware of the story of the founder's life before she arrived at the school, there is no doubt at all that she would soon have become well acquainted with its details. She must surely have taken courage and inspiration for her own fatherless sons from the knowledge that a mere foundling had, by means of an apprenticeship, risen to the highest office in the world's most prosperous city.

At the time when Fenton became Master, teaching was done in a small schoolhouse. It had a single schoolroom with a Gallery, rooms above for the Master and the Usher, and a walled courtyard for the boys to play. The boarders, and this would have included the Austen family on their arrival, were housed elsewhere in the town. The pupils, most of whom by this time had to pay for tuition, were the sons of professional people and the more prosperous tradesmen and merchants of the town. From time to time they included the illegitimate sons of the Dukes of Dorset at Knole Park, whose land bordered the school. Numbers

fluctuated widely, sometimes falling to as few as twenty pupils and rising to fifty or more, depending in part on the reputation of the Master of the day but also as a result of the killer epidemics so common at the time, the worst of which was smallpox.

The school day was a long one for the boys, who sat on the benches set around the walls of the schoolroom. To maximise daylight, from April to September the hours were 6-11am and 1-6pm, a rigorous ten hours of tuition.⁹ In winter the day was reduced to seven hours. The boys had to provide their own candles and the Austen accounts for 1708 itemise the purchase of wax candles as well as a charge levied for the heating and sweeping of the schoolroom. The boys said prayers at the beginning and end of the school day and before they went out to play. Every Friday, as required in the founder's will, they crossed the road to St Nicholas Church to hear the Litany and to give thanks for the benefits bestowed on them by their benefactors.

By the time Elijah Fenton arrived at the school he had already established his reputation as a poet and in his first year there he published a slim volume of thirteen pages, *An Ode to the Sea for the New Year*, glorifying the exploits of the Duke of Marlborough.¹⁰ In 1709, sponsored by the Duke of Dorset at Knole, he edited a *Miscellany*, which included works by established poets such as Dryden and Milton as well as poems of his own.

His academic duties would have included teaching Latin, Greek and English but it was the job of his Usher to deal with arithmetic and accounts. Those pupils whose parents could afford it were prepared for university, others for taking up apprenticeships. The Austen accounts itemise the purchase in 1712 of Latin books for all five boys and French books for three of them, so French was also on the curriculum. In the same year £2.14.8d was paid to 'ye writing Master for all five boys', so although general tuition was covered by the terms of her employment, Elizabeth had to pay for extras.

Fenton and Elizabeth Austen were together at Sevenoaks for only four years. They appear to have been very successful years, since during Fenton's tenure it is recorded that the school was 'brought into reputation'.¹¹ He was a man accustomed to good living and was lured away from teaching with promises of more remunerative employment. Elizabeth and her children must by this time have felt well settled as they stayed on under the next two Masters, Christopher Hussey and John Simpson.

Fenton's promised profitable employment did not materialise, but the diplomat Charles Boyle, 4th Earl of Orrery, took him on as Secretary. They travelled together on various missions to the Netherlands and when this employment came to an end, Fenton took over the tutoring of Boyle's son Lord Broghill, a job at which he excelled, and he stayed on until his charge went up to Cambridge. Since graduating, Fenton had moved in London's most prestigious literary and social circles, establishing an early connection with Alexander Pope. This relationship was to influence every subsequent stage of his career. It was Pope who recommended him to his next employer, Secretary of State James Craggs. Craggs had been

poorly educated and, wishing to acquire polish under the instruction of a man of intellect, was willing to pay handsomely. He found in Fenton a brilliant literary companion who recommended himself to everyone with his wit, the suavity of his manners and the elegance of his dress. Unfortunately, Craggs died of smallpox and Fenton was once more obliged to look for employment.

Again it was Pope who came to the rescue. He had recently completed a much acclaimed translation of Homer's *Iliad*, and had embarked on the twenty-four books of the *Odyssey*. Growing weary of translating, he engaged Fenton and another classical scholar, the Revd William Broome, to undertake the translation of twelve of the books, intending to pass off their work as his own. The exclusivity of Pope's name as the author would promote much larger sales of the book, so secrecy over its shared authorship was necessary. Pope made more than £3,500 on the enterprise, paying Broome £500 and Fenton a mere £200 for the four books which he translated – a lack of generosity which cooled their friendship for a time.

Fenton had significant success in his own right, most importantly with a play in verse, *The Tragedy of Marianne*, which tells of the heroine's murder at the hands of her husband King Herod; published in 1723, it was both popular and profitable.¹⁰ It was intended as a closet drama, one designed to be read rather than performed, but Fenton was encouraged by a friend to approach Colley Cibber, the manager of the Drury Lane theatre, with a view to having it staged. The notoriously acerbic Cibber refused, taking the opportunity to suggest publicly that Fenton would do better to seek some other form of livelihood than writing. The play was then accepted at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre and was a tremendous success, earning Fenton well over £1000, which he used to pay off debts incurred by his attendance at Court. It coincidentally seems to have revived the ailing fortunes of the theatre, attracting 'the greatest Audience ever known there' on the occasion of the third night Benefit on 25 February 1723.¹⁰ It was at the same theatre five years later that John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* was first performed, taking the town by storm (**Plate 8**).

Dr Johnson judged Fenton on the whole 'an excellent versifier and a good poet', but, along with others, thought some of his verses trifling. As a poet of the Augustan age, Fenton's style, themes and allusions were neo-classical, but not all his writing was concerned with lofty ideals and pastoral bliss. From one collection of his poems comes this first stanza of *Olivia*:

Olivia's lewd, but looks devout
And Scripture proofs she throws about
When first you try to win her:
But pull your fob of guineas out;
See Jenny first, and never doubt
To find the saint a sinner.

It was this type of verse, no doubt, which prompted Southey to dismiss Fenton

as ‘a poet Minorite, whose productions are more characterised by indecency than wit’.

Fenton’s last employment, beginning in 1724, was as tutor to the son of the widowed Lady Trumbull at her very grand house Easthampstead Park, near Wokingham. The boy was taught first at home, and was then accompanied by his tutor to Trinity Hall in Cambridge, a practice which was common at the time. While there Fenton took the opportunity to take his own Master’s degree. After the boy graduated, Fenton stayed on at Easthampstead at the invitation and expense of Lady Trumbull, auditing her accounts, editing an acclaimed edition of Milton’s poems and generally leading a life of ease. As he grew older he became increasingly corpulent, taking little exercise and often drinking two bottles of port a day. His constitution became more sluggish as he became more indolent and there was a report that a servant who waited on him at an inn claimed that at mealtimes he liked to ‘lie abed and be fed with a spoon’.¹¹ His death at Easthampstead on 16 January 1730, aged forty-seven, was probably brought on by a severe attack of gout, or as Pope wrote to Broome, ‘complication of Gross Humors not discharging themselves’. He was buried at Easthampstead church, his fulsome epitaph composed by Pope, borrowing the first two lines from Crashaw:

This modest stone, what few vain marbles can
May truly say, here lies an honest man
A poet blest beyond the poet’s fate
Whom Heav’n kept sacred from the proud and great
Foe to loud praise and friend to learned ease
Content with science in the vale of peace
Calmly he look’d on either life, & here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear
From Nature’s temp’rate feast rose satisfy’d
Thank’d Heav’n that he had liv’d, and that he dy’d

It is at the time of his death that it is possible to form the best idea of Fenton’s character and his outstanding ability as a teacher; from the tributes paid to him by his friends we may judge just what kind of man it was who had employed Elizabeth Austen and taught her sons. His former pupil Lord Broghill, by now 5th Earl of Orrery, declared him to be ‘a man of the most tender humanity. He was never named but with praise and fondness, as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent.’ Dr Johnson records that ‘He preserved a character unsullied, his name always mentioned with honour.’¹¹

Meanwhile, what had become of the children of the brave Elizabeth Austen? Just how well had they managed to ‘shift in ye world’? Elizabeth must have feared very much for her eldest child Betty’s future, an advantageous marriage being the only hope of guaranteed prosperity. Financing her upbringing had been a struggle; her £400 settlement, not due until she came of age, was far from being a fortune and as all the income from property had been settled on the boys, her mother

was supposed to support her out of her own jointure, which was barely adequate for one person, let alone two. After submitting her very first annual accounts to Stringer and Holman in 1706, Elizabeth had been taken to task by them for using some of the boys' income for Betty's maintenance. She recorded her fear that if she were to die before Betty came of age, her daughter might actually end up 'on the Parish'. By 1715, with Betty now of marriageable age and needing to look fashionable, Elizabeth's accounts for the first time itemise her clothes separately: they cost £8.11.0d, a sizeable drain on her mother's finances. But in 1717 she at last came into her inheritance, so was able to provide for herself. She subsequently made an excellent marriage to George Hooper, a Tonbridge attorney and friend of one of her Weller cousins. She went to live at Powells, now known as Lyons, in East Street, Tonbridge and had three children.¹²

Son and heir John V, brought up by his uncles and aunts, went up to Pembroke College, Cambridge as a fellow commoner and became a gentleman. He married his cousin Mary Stringer but died early at the age of only thirty-two. His two-year-old son John VI inherited the whole estate. Robert also died young; there are no surviving indentures for him, which suggests that he was not apprenticed. He left Sevenoaks at fifteen and went to live in Tenterden, in all probability going into trade. Having contracted smallpox, he died at the age of twenty-four; his elegant ledgerstone with the Austen arms at its head is in Tenterden Church, paid for by his siblings (it describes him as 'Robert Austen, gent') (**Plate 6**). Stephen, apprenticed to a London stationer, was the only son not to spend his working life in Kent. He set up as a bookseller and publisher of religious and medical books at The Sign of the Angel and Bible in St Paul's Churchyard, and died at the age of forty-seven; he is buried at Tonbridge.

William and Thomas both settled in Tonbridge after their apprenticeships, benefitting throughout their professional lives from their Weller connections. William had been indentured to a surgeon in Woolwich and married Rebecca Walter, a doctor's widow with one child. They had four more children together, one of whom, Hampson, died in infancy. It was George, their second child, who was Jane Austen's father. Rebecca died a few days after giving birth to their daughter Leonora, at the age of only thirty-six. William took a second wife, Sussanah Kelk, a wealthy forty-eight-year-old widow. Less than two years later, William himself died and was buried in Tonbridge Church (**Plate 7**). The widowed Sussanah lived on in the family home for another thirty years but seems to have shown no inclination to look after the orphaned children. They were sent off to be cared for by Uncle Stephen and his wife in London, but there is some evidence that they may have been very unwilling carers, possibly neglecting the children.¹³ Whatever the truth, the children moved away one by one. George returned to Kent as a pupil at Tonbridge School, his fees paid for by his uncle Francis. He lodged with his Aunt Betty Hooper at Powells until he took up a fellowship at St John's College, Oxford.

Though apprenticed to a haberdasher, Thomas became an apothecary, teaming up with his surgeon brother William. He lived at Blairs, a lovely house

in Tonbridge High Street which is still standing, and was active in public affairs in the town. He was notably one of the promoters of the Medway Navigation scheme of 1740, a project which greatly increased local trade. He lived on into his seventies and he too is buried at Tonbridge church.

From a material point of view, Francis was the most successful of all the children. He was indentured to a London attorney, at a cost of £140, highlighting the gross inadequacy of the £40 provision made for this purpose in his grandfather's will.

The year Francis went off to London, an entry in his mother's accounts itemises £29.10.6d for fitting him out in his clothes and for 'physick for the smallpox'. More fortunate than his brother Robert, he recovered and, returning to Sevenoaks, began his working life as a lawyer there with, as Henry Austen wrote, '£800 and a bundle of pens'.¹⁴ In 1743 he bought the elegant Red House, now the premises of the legal firm of Knocker and Foscott, which can trace its origins, unbroken, right back to Francis as its founder in 1730 (**Plate 14**). He became agent to the Dukes of Dorset at Knole, and a Clerk of the Peace for Kent and bought a good deal of land in the town. Though very rich, he did not forget the school where he had been a pupil, and was a governor there for twenty years. He married late, at the age of almost fifty. His wealthy first wife Anne Motley died in childbirth in 1747, the year of their marriage. He then married Jane Chadwick, who also brought with her a substantial fortune. Old Francis, as he was affectionately known, was the only one of Elizabeth's children who lived long enough to meet Jane Austen. She visited the Red House with Cassandra and her parents in 1788 when she was twelve. While there she must surely have worshipped at St Nicholas Church, which her great uncles had attended on Fridays as schoolboys, to hear the Litany and give thanks for their good fortune.

In an undated letter to James Edward Austen-Leigh, Henry Austen recalls staying with Old Francis as a boy. 'All that I remember of him is, that he wore a wig like a Bishop, & a suit of light gray ditto, coat, vest & hose. In his picture above the chimney (the portrait ascribed to Ozias Humphrey) 'the coat & vest had a narrow gold lace edging, about half an inch broad, but in my day he had laid aside the gold edging, though he retained a perfect identity of colour, texture & make to his life's end – I think he was born in Anne's reign and was of course a smart man of George the First's. It is a sort of privilege to have seen and conversed with such a model of a hundred years since.'¹⁴ Old Francis was indeed old: he died in 1791 aged ninety-three (**Plate 2**).

The mother of these successful children lived just long enough to see Stephen, the youngest of her sons, established in his apprenticeship. She died in the winter of 1721 and her body was taken back to Tonbridge for burial on 25 February; although there is no record of her birth date, it is reasonable to suppose that she must have been approaching fifty.

There is no doubt that the action taken by this resourceful woman to educate her boys and maintain the family's social status was of profound importance to future generations of Austens. To show such initiative and tenacity in fending

for herself and her children would have been admirable at any time; to do so in the early 18th century, and as a woman, was truly remarkable. Admirers of Jane Austen and her work can only be thankful that Elijah Fenton, Headmaster of Sevenoaks School, required a housekeeper at precisely the time when Elizabeth Austen was in such desperate need of an income and her sons of a good education.

Notes

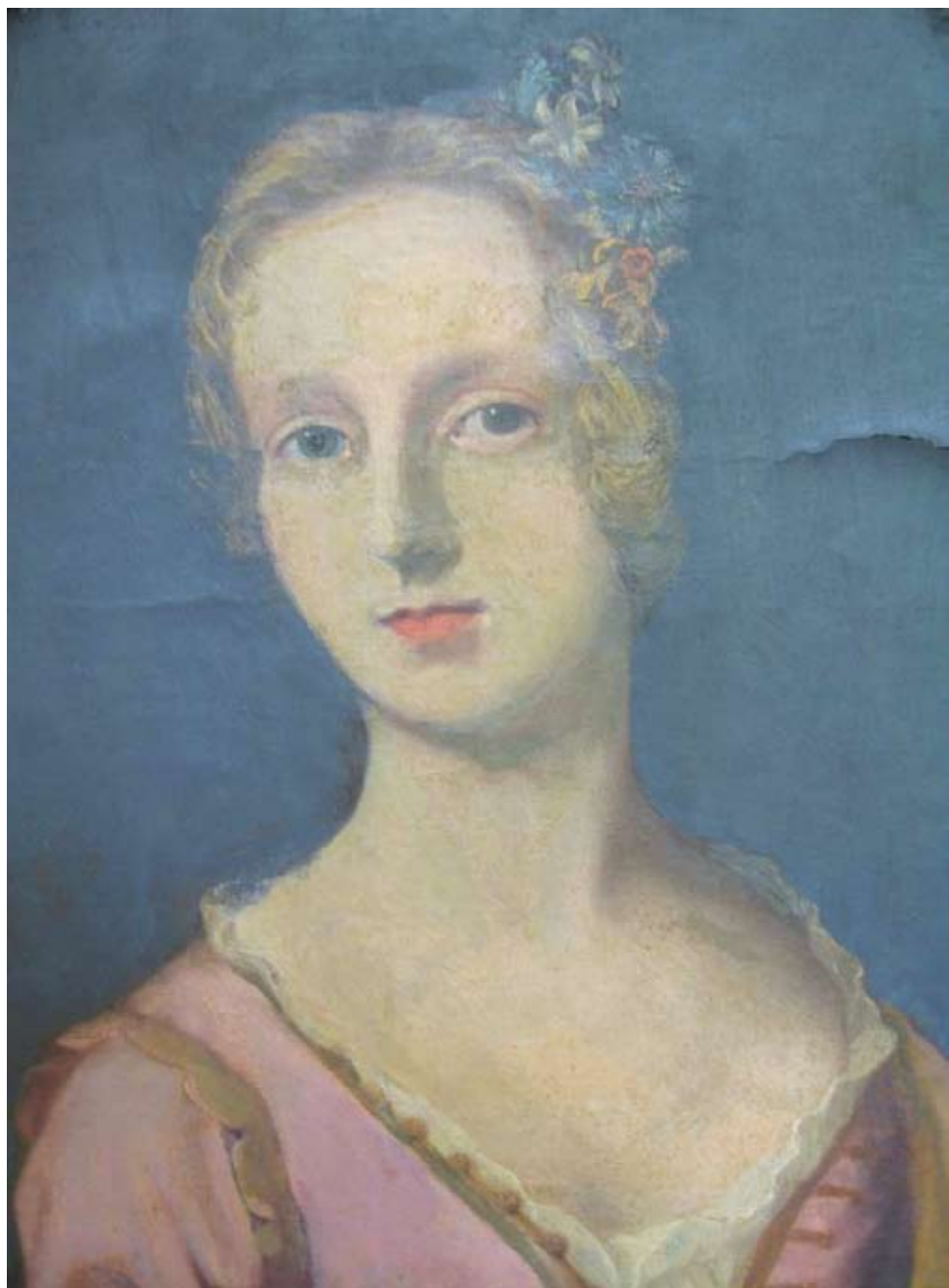
- 1 Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2004), p. 1.
- 2 Alan Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation in Kent* (Leicester, 1986), p. 54.
- 3 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1727).
- 4 Anthony Cronk, *St. Margaret's Church, Horsmonden* (1967), p. 38.
- 5 Jon Spence, *A Century of Wills from Jane Austen's Family 1705-1806* (The Jane Austen Society of Australia, 2001), pp. 7-14.
- 6 R.A. Austen-Leigh, *Austen Papers 1704-1856* (privately printed, 1942), pp. 3-16.
- 7 Earl Harlan, *Elijah Fenton 1683-1730* (Philadelphia, 1937), p. 17.
- 8 Brian Scragg, *Sevenoaks School* (Ashgrove Press, 1993), pp. 12-16, 21 and 46.
- 9 Maggie Lane, *Jane Austen's Family through Five Generations* (London, 1997), p. 29.
- 10 *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford).
- 11 Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*.
- 12 Margaret Wilson, *Jane Austen's Family and Tonbridge* (The Jane Austen Society, 2001), pp. 16-20.
- 13 Lefroy MS.
- 14 Austen-Leigh, pp. 16-17.



1. Elijah Fenton. Stipple engraving (after S. Harding)



2. *Francis Austen. Copy of portrait attributed to Ozias Humphrey*



3. Jane Stringer. Portrait recently identified by Deirdre Le Faye



4. Bradford

that is not otherwise disposed of by Law, these houses they reckon with
 this power, so must take them from us, these things I did not well take
 of them, for I that they did not perform ^{in my opinion} of promise made me at my father
 & husband's death to be as kind to me, as I could yet that it must be so
 I had no pocket to know of opinion of my Lord chancellor in these cases &
 some others in our concern, but at last it was considered of houses in Lease might
 not come as of freehold, so we had two Lawyers opinion that ^{that} was a choice
 of my husband's, so we proceeded to find a division of of freehold from y^e Lease
 which was made appear by an old deed, so they took only y^e free hold
 houses for my son, then I feared that Lease houses might be sold to pay
 some of my husband's debts, so might have some of my goods for housekeeping
 & before they would by em for my son so might be kept all together as was
 to be, but they would not have y^e trouble of looking after them, so no
 arguments would persuade em to buy em for my son, but posted it at
 y^e Market house that they were to be sold to any person, in little
 time a Man in y^e town bid money for y^e Lease, but but leaves it
 which was hindrance to y^e selling, no more of my husband's debts yet for
 which made y^e creditors grumble, then I said my Brothers would buy y^e
 Lease but in vain, yet told me y^e Lease & goods will more than pay debts
 so would have, agree with y^e creditors & they will assign all y^e right by them

5. Memorandum of Elizabeth (Weller) Austen



6. Robert Austen memorial



6a. Austen Arms on Robert Austen's memorial



7. William Austen memorial



8. Lincoln's Inn Theatre, London



9. William Sennock

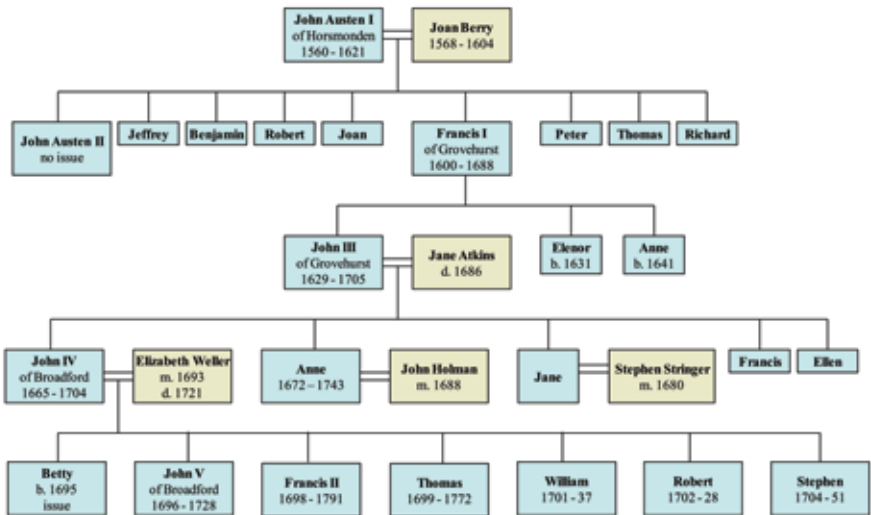


10. Joan Austen memorial brass



11. The Priory and Red House (formerly Chauntlers) in Bordyke, Tonbridge

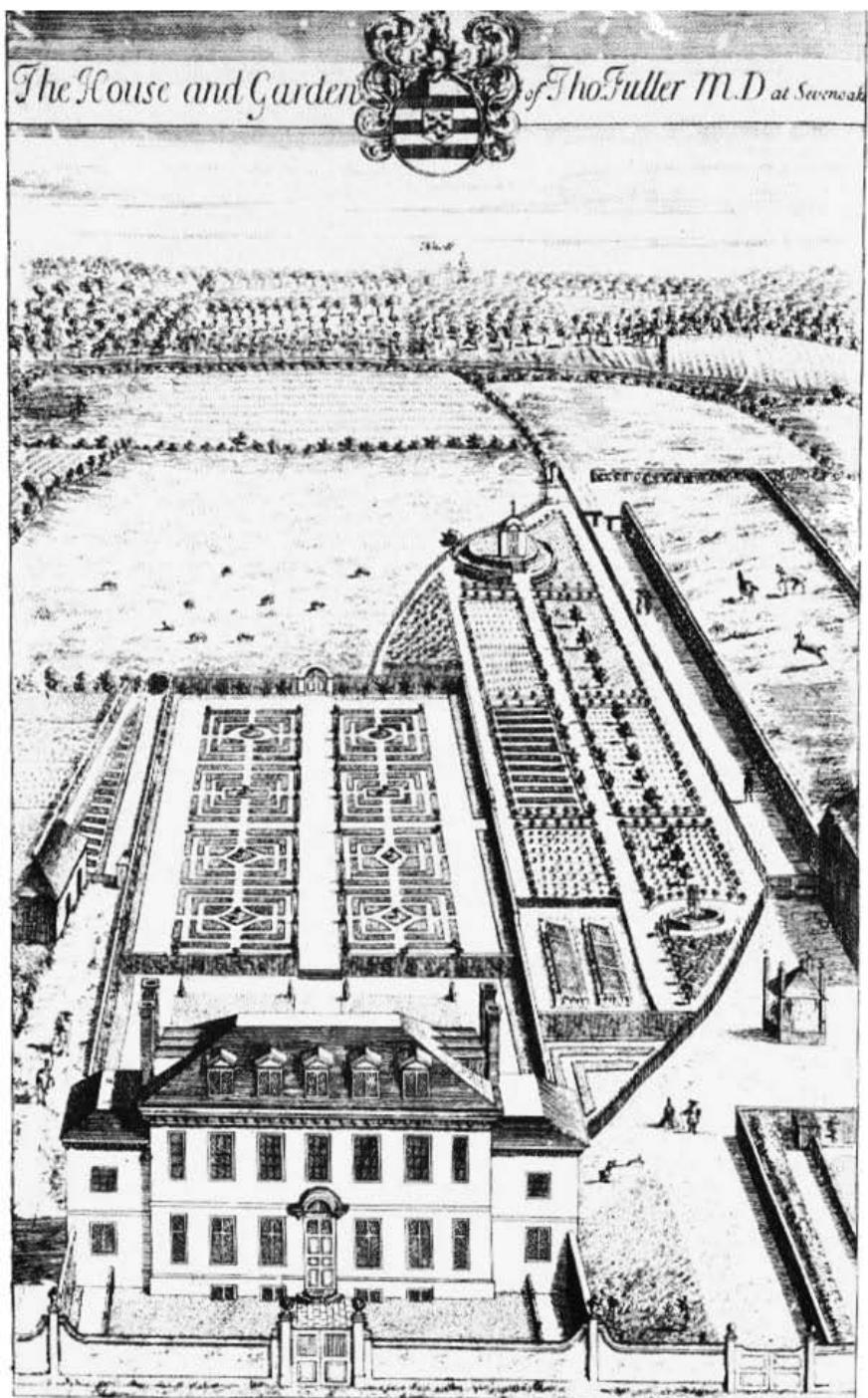
The Austens of Horsmonden and Tonbridge



12. Austen family tree



13. Grovehurst



14. The Red House, Sevenoaks

T H E
P O L L
F O R
KNIGHTS of the SHIRE

TO REPRESENT
The County of K E N T;

In which is inserted,

Not only the Names of the ELECTORS and
CANDIDATES, but also every Person's FREE-
HOLD and Place of Abode.

Taken at *Maidstone*, on *Wednesday* and *Thursday*, the
15th and 16th of *May*, 1734.

By Sir *HENRY HICKS*, Knt. Sheriff.

To which is added,

A Compleat and Correct Alphabetical INDEX.

L O N D O N:

Printed for STEPHEN AUSTEN, Bookseller, at the
Angel and Bible, in *St Paul's Church-Yard*. 1734.

Jane Austen's family in the Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone

Mark Ballard and Alison Cresswell

In recent years the county archives of Hampshire have enjoyed a much higher public profile and more investment than those of Kent, with their valued links to Chawton, and their Austen-Leigh and related collections in an honoured place. But Kent too can and should take pride in its remarkable family and estate collections.

An old friend of this Society, the late Henry Rice, long believed that the Kent county archives contain at least as much material for the Austen family as Hampshire's, and that we ought to take a leaf from their book and make more of it. His confidence caused the present authors some initial surprise, because beyond the archives of the Knatchbull family, which have the most direct bearing on the novelist herself, there did not seem much that was obvious, no very sizeable family archive with the name 'Austen' on it. Yet we would now estimate that nearly thirty archive groups (or *fonds*) at CKS might usefully be searched for material on Jane's relatives on her father's side, and the family and connections of her brother Edward Knight. It may be buried away below the level of catalogue descriptions or indexes, and computer searching should not be expected to bring it all to the surface. Until the catalogues are reflected more reliably and comprehensively on the archive service website www.kentarchives.org.uk, the summaries of accessions up to 1980 in Dr Felix Hull's excellent *Guide to the Kent County Archives Office* and its two supplements may still be found useful, although since that date much material has naturally been added or relocated. Full catalogues of some Kent archives, such as those of the Sackvilles and Knatchbolls, were included in the National Archives' 'Access to Archives' project, and we would recommend they be accessed through this part of the National Archives website. Yet coverage of Kent's family and estate collections on this site is poor compared to that for some comparable counties; for many of them only a paper catalogue and card indexes are available, while much material remains uncatalogued. 'Centre for Kentish Studies' is the name by which the Kent County Archives Office is currently known, since it amalgamated in 1991 with the main centrally-held Local Studies Library for Kent. With our forthcoming move to more modern and environmentally-controlled premises, its name is certain to change again: let us hope the next name change will be less unfortunate than the last.

The following, then, is an overview of the relevant archive sources at CKS. Our treatment is uneven: with some sources, a brief mention in Appendix I must suffice, while the relevance of others to certain topics, once discovered, made an element of digging on our own part hard to resist. We shall conclude by focusing on one remarkable family correspondence which until now appears unknown to writers on Jane's West Kent family.

The Knatchbull archives

On 28 August 1820, Sir Edward Knatchbull, 9th baronet, a widower with six children from his previous marriage, wrote from Mersham le Hatch to Fanny, the eldest daughter of Jane Austen's brother Edward Knight:

Much as I flatter myself that a favourable Reception will be given to this Communication, it is quite impossible for me to conceal the anxiety with which I shall await your reply. I hope I am not mistaken in the persuasion I entertain of possessing your good opinion, and that you will yourself find reasons to justify and approve the step I am now taking. It is not from any professions that I can make, that I shall venture to found my claim to your esteem. Allow me to say that you are the only person in whose society I can find happiness, and to whose example and care I could entrust the welfare of my children. Your confidence if given to me will not I hope be misplaced – be assured on my part it shall always be repaid by the most unremitted and constant attention.

Anxious as I am to be appraised of your acceptance (if I may indulge the hope) of the offer which this letter is intended to convey, I am not the less [anxious] to know that it is confirmed by the approbation of Mr Knight....¹

It was actually Edward Knight who replied:

Godmersham Park
August 30th 1820

My dear Sir,

I have undertaken, at my eldest Daughters Request, to acknowledge your letter received this morning, and to express her hopes that you will attribute her not having written herself to its real cause, the present agitated state of her spirits, for tho she is fully sensible of the honorable Distinction which you have shown her, as well as of the handsome and flattering terms in which your offer is contained, she has assured me it will be a Relief to her in her present state of mind to express her Acceptance thereof through the medium of my pen. I can have no hesitation in giving my Approbation and Sanction to an Alliance which holds out the fairest promises of happiness and comfort to a beloved child....²

Fanny and Sir Edward did marry, on 24 October 1820, and that is how her Austen manuscripts were to become part of the Knatchbull archive. By him, Fanny had nine children, and the eldest son of the marriage, Edward Lord Brabourne, inherited his parents' papers on her death in 1882, his father having died in 1849.

These papers included 65 letters from Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra, and left by Cassandra to Fanny on her death in 1845. This enabled Lord Brabourne to produce in 1884 the first edition of Jane Austen's letters;³ and in a letter dated 7 June 1889 he shows a keen awareness of their potential value. He had already sold one of her letters bearing the full signature 'Jane Austen', and was in correspondence concerning four others. On his death in 1893, the collection was dispersed when his library (amongst other valuables) was sold by London auctioneers, Puttick and Simpson. Two copies of the sale catalogue exist in the Knatchbull MSS, listing Jane's letters to Cassandra, and also the original manuscript of *Lady Susan*, described as a 'most interesting MS ... all in the Autograph of Miss Jane Austen'.⁴ One of the catalogues has been annotated with the prices fetched by each lot, the letters fetching between 2 guineas and £6, and the manuscript of *Lady Susan* £37. Thankfully for us, Fanny's own five surviving letters from her Aunt Jane were not included in the sale.

The Knatchbull family seat had been at Mersham, near Ashford, since the late 15th century, but Mersham le Hatch, their Robert Adam mansion whose apartments were described by Edward Hasted as 'superb as well as commodious', was vacated in 1950-1 by John, 7th Baron Brabourne, as being too large for his purposes. Fifty-seven of the family portraits came to County Hall, Maidstone, to be displayed there for over 50 years because Lord Brabourne's new home was too small to accommodate them; and in 1962, after the publication of Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen's *Kentish Family* (Methuen, London, 1960), the family's archive was deposited permanently at the Kent County Archives Office.

Only after KAO's catalogue of the Knatchbull MSS had appeared did scholars realize the riches they contained. Fanny Austen-Knight's youthful diaries and her letters to her former governess Miss Dorothy Chapman in particular were found to contain a wealth of additional information on the novelist and her circle. The five letters from Jane to Fanny held at CKS were written between November 1814, when Fanny was twenty-one, and March 1817. They are sufficiently well-known to require little comment here: they demonstrate that after the loss of her mother in 1808, which made her effectively the mistress of Godmersham, Fanny confided in Jane on the subject of suitors for her hand. Her aunt was happy to respond to her favourite niece at some length, despite her own failing health at the time of her three letters of 1817, and there are oblique references to the reception of *Mansfield Park* and the likely responses of readers to *Emma* and *Persuasion*.⁵

Fanny kept her diaries for no less than sixty-nine years, from 1804 to 1872, in the small leather-bound volumes of *The Ladies Complete Pocket Book*.⁶ At the front of the early volumes were engravings of fashionable apparel for the previous year, which Fanny cut out and placed her choice of fabrics behind. They also contained printed amusements and information for their owners, such as poems, short plays, recipes, fashion hints, new songs, enigmas and charades. Fanny recorded details of her daily social contacts, including visits from and to her relatives, events and outings. She reserved her more personal reflections on the year that had passed to the end of each diary. Many have suffered from damp,

which has damaged their bindings and blurred Fanny's writing; it is hoped that the digital photographs recently taken of the diaries to 1820 will prove more easily legible than the previous microfilms.

Fanny's long series of letters to Miss Chapman from 1803, when the governess resigned her post at Godmersham, to 1857 is another fortunate survival.⁷ Apparently they were thoughtfully returned to Fanny by Miss Chapman's nephew after her death, and they not only confirm the evidence of her diary entries but also amplify it, containing unique information, for instance on the rearrangements in Edward Knight's household at Godmersham and Chawton following his wife's sudden death.⁸

H. W. Knocker collection (Tonbridge title deeds)

Tonbridge's relatively recent awakening to its connections with the Austen family, exemplified by the launch of a 'literary walk' in September 2009, owes much to the research work of Gilbert Hoole and Margaret Wilson. Mrs Wilson's *Jane Austen's family and Tonbridge* has been a trusted starting-point in our own investigations, and sets out the present state of knowledge relating to Jane's family there with admirable clarity. But we wish to echo the tribute in her own preface to the groundwork of Gilbert Hoole. Hoole's primary subject of investigation was the town of Tonbridge and its public school, and the Tonbridge Civic Society, of which he was a pillar, has made use of his research in its work to preserve the town's historic buildings.⁹ His *Tonbridge Miscellany*, published in 1985, is charmingly written and highly recommended for anyone who knows or wishes to know the town.¹⁰ However it can be slightly cagey about its sources, which probably his research notes would disclose more fully. It is hoped that the itinerary for the literary walk will stimulate further investigation into the history of the properties on the route and nearby. In fact it might be undertaken with some urgency, as the site of one featured building, 180 High Street, thought despite its probably Edwardian frontage to be the last home of George Austen's first cousin Henry, has just been sold with permission to re-develop. Until recently the site of Warners' solicitors, it appears to be under fairly imminent threat of demolition, its inclusion on the itinerary notwithstanding. We are not sure of the exact grounds for associating it with Henry Austen: they may well lie within the title deeds in the Knocker collection at CKS which Gilbert Hoole certainly used, and which at least partly emanate from the lawyers' practice in Sevenoaks founded by 'old Francis' Austen, Jane's great-uncle, and now called Knocker and Foskett.

Other deeds from this collection have helped these researchers to identify a building once occupying the site of 174 High Street, and only finally destroyed by fire as recently as 1997, as the matrimonial home of Jane's grandfather William Austen and his second wife Susanna. There is no doubt that their home was indeed *very* near to this spot, but the bundle of deeds cited¹¹ were actually later used to provide title to nearby property, 5 Bank Street (once called Back Lane), the site of which George Austen sold to one Thomas Slatter, a surgeon like his father, in 1768. The property in Bank Street adjoining the present 174 High Street

is now (and probably always has been) numbered 1; No 5 being further down **(Plate 15)**. Slatter did come to occupy a dwellinghouse on the site of 174 High St;¹² but unless more evidence for No 174 comes to light, we must doubt that the land which George Austen sold him extended that far, for 5 Bank Street is itself quite a large site, now divided into four. It was formerly large enough to contain the dwellinghouse (formerly *The Greyhound*, later *The Bell*) and garden, as well as the stable and slaughterhouse converted to a hopkiln, which George Austen conveyed, with no mention of a High Street frontage. No 1 Bank Street is currently boarded up; other buildings in or near this old part of town, once the market area, have disappeared in recent years; it may be that none of the present row of buildings were there in Austen or Slatter's time, but the more we know, the better the case conservationists can put for their survival.

Attested copies of the marriage settlement between William Austen and Susanna Kelk of 1736 (the trustees of which were George Hooper and Peter Kelk) and the conveyance to Slatter of 1768 appear in at least two of these deed bundles and have been remarked upon, but two significant documents in between seem to have escaped notice. The first is a mortgage in fee of 1758 by George Austen to his uncle Francis of most of the land in his father's marriage settlement – not only one third of that previously owned by his father but also all of that brought to the marriage by his stepmother – and the second a reconveyance of the same land from Francis back to George in 1763. At that date Susanna was still living.

It has been commented that William Austen neglected to alter his will after his second marriage, yet this was not necessarily an oversight.¹³ His will of 1735 had already nominated his brothers Francis and Stephen as guardians for his children, following their mother's death, while his marriage settlement had set up a trust in respect of his house and land. This provided Susanna with a life interest, with remainder to William's heirs (if their marriage failed to produce issue, as was surely expected). But Susanna is not named as a party to the mortgage of 1758, nor is any previous transfer of ownership to her stepson recited. So we may assume that the creation of a trust had enabled George Austen, with his father dead, to bar the entail when he came of age. One likely intervening document would have been a common recovery, converting his interest to a fee simple, for it is implicit in the title that he acquired that not only the marriage settlement trustees but also Susanna had given their consent. Further, in fairness to the somewhat maligned Susanna, she had provided consent not only in the case of the one-third part of William's land, but also her own, far larger, contribution: 11 acres of land behind or adjoining Tonbridge School, worth about £1,000, which under the terms of the marriage settlement she was (after William's death) at liberty to retain, convey or bequeath according to her *own* wish. Though she apparently retained a life tenancy, this enabled George in her lifetime to use this land as security for a loan from his uncle, which he was able to pay off with interest in 1763; and, interestingly, the headmaster of Tonbridge, the Revd James Cawthorn, under whom George had both studied and taught, was named in 1758 as one of the tenants.¹⁴

The marriage of William Austen and Rebecca Hampson

Staying in Tonbridge, we might focus upon the rather unusual circumstances of the meeting of William Austen and his first wife Rebecca, which will have struck those who have studied Jane Austen's family tree. Rebecca Hampson had previously been married to a William Walter, thought to be from either Tonbridge or Frant. The latter suggestion, Richard Austen-Leigh's, now appears unfounded. Born, it is now clear from the Tonbridge parish registers, on 20 December 1696, into a line of yeoman farmers, and baptized a fortnight later, this individual apparently attended Tonbridge School and St John's College Oxford, trained as a doctor, and then moved all the way to Gloucester; and, when still aged only about 23, he married Rebecca, the daughter of a Gloucester physician who was also a baronet.¹⁵ The discovery by Hoole and Jarvis of the baptism of their child William Hampson Walter in Gloucester in 1721, whom we later know as George Austen's half-brother of New Trench in the north of Tonbridge, seemed to link the father to Tonbridge.¹⁶ Only five years later, in 1726, before the age of thirty, the precipitate doctor was dead, and buried in Gloucester. Not until after his death did his widow come to Tonbridge, where she met her second husband from that parish, William Austen, himself a surgeon, who was to become George's father. Hoole comments, 'It was a good marriage for him: country surgeons, we have it on Jane's authority, did not ordinarily meet the family of a baronet.'¹⁷

All this does seem a rather improbable scenario, and the multitude of Walters living in the Trench part of Tonbridge did cause us for a time to suspect mistaken identity. However, for this too much was already known about Rebecca's family and her Freeman relatives, and the fact that George's half-brother William Hampson Walter was found to have been baptized in Gloucester seemed to indicate that his father as well as his mother were correctly identified. What then accounted for Rebecca's move to Tonbridge?

The Tonbridge connection of Jane Austen was something Gilbert Hoole came to focus on only towards the end of a long life, and apparently William Walter's will, which would have confirmed his findings, eluded him and other researchers. He did not have the benefit of the National Archives' Documents Online: now that we do, it is not difficult to access William Walter's will, which, affecting property in two dioceses as it did, was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and to conclude that in all important respects Hoole and Jarvis's findings were correct.¹⁸ But there is more that can be added. Though he describes himself as of the City of Gloucester, Esquire, William Walter's Tonbridge origins are apparent in his will; despite his youth he already owned substantial land, not only New Trench but also Coldharbour Farm, Upper and Lower Barnfield, and other land in the north part of Tonbridge and Hadlow, which he had left behind him in the hands of tenant farmers. Rebecca's father Sir George Hampson, the Gloucester physician baronet, had died in 1724 and had probably passed most of his property to his son, the 5th baronet Hampson. Sir George had only recently succeeded to the baronetcy, on the failure of the 3rd baronet's line in 1719; himself descended from the 1st baronet Hampson, he had probably taken up a profession as he had not expected to

inherit the title himself. So Rebecca probably needed the income of her husband's land, maybe a roof over her head as well. Another will, proved in the Rochester probate records at CKS in 1719, that of Elizabeth Walter, of Southborough and previously the Upper Trench part of north Tonbridge, shows how William Walter had come by this land, which according to Elizabeth's will comprised over 150 acres. We now find that Elizabeth Walter was not his aunt but his grandmother: William inherited it as his father, George Walter, had predeceased her, and by the time William died in 1726, his mother Sarah was also dead.¹⁹

William Walter's own will is interesting in two further respects. After leaving an annuity to a Gloucester family from the farm income, he left the land on trust: half to his widow for her lifetime or until her remarriage, and half to his son. The two trustees were George Hooper, later a trustee of Susanna Kelk's marriage settlement with William Austen, and James Eldridge, both of Tonbridge. Since George Hooper was born in 1691, his time at Tonbridge School would have coincided with William Walter's, and he was William Austen's brother-in-law, married to his elder sister Betty. William Walter's will took a long time to prove: this did not happen until 16 May 1729, three years after his death. By this time Rebecca had already remarried William Austen. In so doing she thus sacrificed her share in her first husband's estate to their son. And the will took even longer to administer: this had to be finished off by William Austen, as Rebecca herself died following childbirth in 1733, before completing the administration.

George Hooper was the fifth in a long line of Tonbridge attorneys of that name which had its offices at a house variously called Lyons or Powells in East Street (**Plate 16**). It is fortunate that part of the building survives, although it was once considerably larger. It seems very likely this was an early port-of-call for Rebecca when she arrived in Tonbridge, probably in 1727, with a claim to William Walter's tenanted farms. William Austen may not yet have been occupying the premises only just across Tonbridge High Street which was his matrimonial home in 1736. But there is little doubt that, while unmarried, he was in the habit of regularly calling on his sister and brother-in-law. Lyons could have been the place of his first or early meetings with Rebecca Hampson. Is it a coincidence that they christened their son George, a Christian name we have not found earlier in the Austen family? Possibly he was named after Rebecca's father, possibly also after George Hooper, who could well have introduced them.

Even the official records imply that this marriage was a somewhat impetuous affair, at least on Rebecca's part. The assumption that the wedding took place in Tonbridge is Austen-Leigh's: but there is no record of it in the Tonbridge parish registers, now at CKS. This impression is supported by a contemporary witness, William Austen's aunt, actually living with the Hoopers at the time, who on 4 April 1728, in another CKS source about which we shall later say more, wrote to her brother:

...in your last you hinted as if by Mr Children's you thought there was now nothing of Cous. Will Austen's *amour* which I then wonder'd at, but I suppose

my Brother [Robert] has told you what reason we have to think he is now married. I think he acts very foolishly in not declaring it and living as if it was so. I find him close & sullen if anything is mention'd to him of it tho I believe he'd have us think he is married. I said something to him a day or so ago and he answer'd me very ruff and unrespectfull. I found he was tutcht when I said the widow I believ'd was not that sincere person he believed.... Nephew S[tephen] Austen seems a little in want of a good wife and is inquisitive as if his friends should assist him in that affair, and is comical enough. He is so wise to say she must have mony & a summ not very small, or else it won't do, shaking his head at what he hears of his Bro. Will's actions.²⁰

If William wished to maintain he was still unmarried he could scarcely have continued the pretence any longer. His first child, a daughter called Hampson, was baptized at Tonbridge on 14 September 1728.²¹ By the time of his aunt's letter, Rebecca was probably more than three months pregnant. William's touchiness might be attributed to the likelihood that he had already had to arrange a secret marriage, somewhere other than Tonbridge. From different dioceses, and with one party a widow, they would have had to apply for a marriage licence and in some haste, and he was embarrassed to admit there would not be a marriage to which the family would be invited. In doubting her sincerity William's aunt seemed as yet unaware that this particular widow was a person of some rank.

Chevening sources

The notion that Jane knew Chevening House, between Westerham and Sevenoaks, has won support in recent years, although the fact that Philip Henry, 5th Earl Stanhope was an early admirer of her works²² is no indication of its truth. The attractive theory advanced by Sir David Waldron Smithers in his book *Jane Austen in Kent* that the descriptions of Rosings and its surroundings in the parish of Hunsford in *Pride and Prejudice* are based on Chevening is not supported by sufficient evidence to dissuade doubters. He argues that the topographical layout of Chevening much better fits Jane Austen's descriptions than Godmersham, the favoured candidate of several other authors. After all, even if the place-name 'Hunsford' is imaginary, Jane Austen did not forbear to place it near the real-life Westerham, and about twenty-five miles from the Gardiners' home at Gracechurch Street, London. But it is one thing to argue that Chevening is the real-life Rosings, quite another to deduce that its rectory was the model for Mr Collins's house: though, interestingly for us, Smithers here turned for evidence to some plans of Chevening and its rectory in its parish records, now at CKS. Sir David would argue this was a house to which Jane Austen would have had access when visiting Kent in the 1790s. The plans were executed when the incumbent was none other than the Revd John Austen, her second cousin. Smithers readily admits this particular connection does not support his argument: John Austen would not have moved in until 1813, when *Pride and Prejudice* had already been written. For evidence that Jane Austen might have visited, he considers the

patronage of Chevening, suggesting this was acquired by ‘old Francis’ Austen from the Lennard family and bequeathed to his son Francis Motley Austen.²³ The Lennard, Stanhope and Farnaby-Austen archives, all at CKS, could well contain the evidence to support or dismiss his contention regarding the patronage. But did the Austens have already existing Stanhope connections, giving Jane cause to be invited to Chevening?

There is also another possible source of contact with the Stanhope family, through Jane’s aunt Philadelphia. After the early death of her parents, it has been believed that Philadelphia Austen was brought up with the Freeman family, relatives of her mother Rebecca. However, both Freeman parents, John-Cope and Catherine Margaret, were already dead in 1734, leaving their children, among them John-Cope junior and Catherine Margareta, orphans too, even before their cousins Philadelphia, George and Leonora were orphaned in 1737. Were arrangements made, then, for Philadelphia to stay with another relative who was already looking after her cousins?²⁴ Whether or not this is the case, a friendship arose between Philadelphia and Catherine Margareta, who was the same age, and about 1746 Catherine married a Charles Stanhope, about six years before Philadelphia sailed to India to meet her own husband, Tysoe Saul Hancock. The son of the marriage, born in 1753, was given the name Philip Dormer Stanhope, suggesting a closer connection to the famous 4th earl of Chesterfield than to the Chevening Stanhopes.

But Philadelphia maintained these connections with the Freemans and Stanhopes on a long-term basis. When she and Mr Hancock returned from India in 1765 she introduced him to her Freeman relatives: in 1779 John-Cope Freeman was invited to be godfather to Philadelphia’s nephew Charles, Jane Austen’s younger brother; and Philip Dormer Stanhope himself had a friendly meeting with Mr Hancock in 1774, recording positive impressions of him.²⁵ However, Jane’s contacts with her aunt Philadelphia were slight, while Philip Dormer’s unreliable character seems to make him an unlikely candidate to provide effective introductions to distinguished circles.²⁶ We must conclude that the likelihood of this route to Chevening society is slighter than one through Francis Motley Austen and his family, and firm evidence of Jane’s contacts with the latter appears elusive.

Woodgate, Papillon and Sackville archives

The papers of these families are not unknown to Austen researchers but may well be worthy of their further attention. Possibly not all are aware that the original material for the *History of the Woodgates of Stonewall Park and of Summerhill in Kent*, privately published in 1910, comes from a family archive which can be seen at CKS. The correspondence was mostly accumulated by the Revd Francis Woodgate of Mountfield, Sussex and his descendants to 1850. As published, the papers are known for their correspondents’ references to George Austen’s Tonbridge cousin the Revd Henry Austen and his children, whom Jane knew well, and also to Philadelphia Walter. We have not attempted an extended comparison between the papers deposited at CKS and the published letters, but would suggest

it might be worthwhile to go back to the original correspondence, which also refers to Francis Motley Austen and his sons. It has been catalogued by our colleagues Peter Wilkinson and the late Donald Gibson (the latter, sadly missed, was a long-time member of this Society).

One daughter of Francis Woodgate, Elizabeth, married William Humphry, vicar of Seal and Kemsing, in 1778, and letters to him from his brother the portrait painter Ozias Humphry (1742-1810), have ended up here, as have papers concerning the administration of Ozias's estate. Ozias received commissions from the duke of Dorset, probably leading to a request to paint 'old Francis' Austen's portrait. As is the way of things, there may be no letters from Ozias to his brother when he was working in Kent; but the normally very full accounts in the Sackville archives should record details of his Sackville commissions. Beside this, Francis Austen's work as agent to the Dukes of Dorset at Knole is documented in the Sackville archives, and his official role, and that of Francis Motley Austen, as clerks of the peace for Kent, in the records of the county quarter-sessions.²⁷

The Revd John Rawston Papillon, from a family distantly related to the Brodnax-Knights, had his own dual connections with both Tonbridge and Chawton. In 1796, while vicar at Tonbridge, he was bequeathed first refusal of the living at Chawton by Thomas Knight; and Jane Austen's brother Henry, then 25 and considering a career in the church, needed to know his decision, for if he turned it down it would be offered to him. Of course he did not refuse it: when Jane Austen herself came to live at Chawton in 1809, Papillon was the incumbent. By this time he had pulled down the old vicarage, replacing it with an extravagant new design. Later on Henry left the army and became Papillon's curate at Chawton. All these and other related matters are reflected in the correspondence of John Rawston's father, David Papillon, at CKS.²⁸

The Weller family correspondence

The resourcefulness shown by Jane's great-grandmother, Elizabeth Weller, in enabling her family to recover from her husband's debts and sudden death is now well-known; and we will conclude by returning to Tonbridge, and Elizabeth's no less interesting brothers and sisters. Elizabeth's grandfather Thomas Weller, a lawyer, had purchased his house, Chauntlers, in Bordyke, Tonbridge, about 1631, and it remained in the family until it was sold to a neighbour, George Children of Ferox Hall (whose son, John George, was known to Jane Austen) in 1800. It was then divided into two properties, now known as The Priory and the Red House. This was the house where Elizabeth Weller grew up with her brothers and sisters before she married John Austen of Broadford (**Plate 11**).

The Austens and the Wellers had supported the parliamentary cause in the English Civil war. Royalist insurgents broke into Chauntlers in 1643: Thomas Weller described his attempts to defend it, together with the parliamentary funds he had collected, in an account published by the Camden Society in 1854. Opposite the house, on the other side of the road, lay Bordyke Pond, since drained and its site absorbed into the churchyard. Elizabeth Weller's father, also Thomas,

built a duckhouse on this pond, which (although carried out at his *own* expense) was to provoke a positively bilious reaction against Elizabeth's brother Robert Weller from John Hooker, who had meanwhile (in 1739) acquired the castle and manor of Tonbridge and considered it an infringement of his manorial rights. Hooker raised a lawsuit, which apparently he lost, after complaining to Robert's son George that

...of the several overt acts of Mr Weller's malevolence towards me (which have not been few) there is none that I have taken so ill as this. It never occurs to my eye or my thoughts but it regurgitates, as I cannot help looking upon it as a trophy or standing memorial of his triumph over me.²⁹

Robert Weller's wife was born Elizabeth Poley, and in 1754 that family's estate at Boxted, Suffolk, was settled on George himself on the failure of the male line. On inheriting it from John Poley three years later George was required, under the terms of the will, to assume the name Poley. Newly married to Frances Hussey, he then moved to Suffolk.

Austen scholars may not realize that Elizabeth Weller's original memorandum and accounts, later abridged and printed by Austen-Leigh, may once, like Thomas Weller's records of his responsibilities in the Civil War, have been part of the Weller-Poley archive (now mostly at the Bury St Edmunds branch of the Suffolk Record Office), in which a copy remains.³⁰ Kent too has long held another part of this archive, U38, presented by the Weller-Poley family to the Kent County Archives Office in August 1939, and apparently of identical provenance to the Suffolk part. Nor is this all. A further box, consisting entirely of family correspondence, was among those collections left to Sevenoaks Library by the antiquarian Dr Gordon Ward. Though it had probably been passed down through a different family, it is not known how he came into possession of it. Responsibility for these Sevenoaks collections passed to the Kent Archives, and this one initially received a catalogue description of such brevity and opaqueness as to stifle all curiosity. (Archive project managers who assess progress towards cataloguing targets merely by counting the number of boxes listed per day, please note.) Amanda Harding, an archivist at Maidstone in the 1980s, went some way towards providing a more informative catalogue and deduced some of the family relationships without which an appreciation of the material is impossible, but left with her work unfinished, and it must be admitted that the following remains a report on work-in-progress.

Largely this is the incoming correspondence of Edward Weller (1678-1762), Elizabeth and Robert's younger brother. He joined the army and reached the rank of captain; then he left Tonbridge and moved to Faversham, where he ran a hop-farm and a brewery and was mayor on four occasions between 1714 and 1746. To place the significance of the correspondence, there are four marriages which one should have in mind. The first was that on 19 January 1694 between John Austen IV of Broadford and Elizabeth Weller. The second took place on 13 May 1697,

between Elizabeth and Edward's sister Mary Weller and Daniel Tilden, a merchant described in the Tonbridge parish register as being of 'St Rood's Westminster', but apparently with stronger ties to St Dunstan in the East in the city of London. The third is the marriage between Elizabeth Austen's eldest daughter, Elizabeth or Betty, in 1722, and George Hooper, the Tonbridge attorney. The fourth is Edward Weller's own marriage, in 1708, to George's elder sister Ann Hooper. Edward was therefore both the uncle of Betty and the brother-in-law of George Hooper, the couple with whom the orphaned George Austen was to live, probably while he attended Tonbridge School. Though Edward left Tonbridge, he retained close ties with the town. In fact, his brother Robert and sister Mary especially made strenuous efforts to keep him in the loop.

The endearingly garrulous Mary Tilden was her brother's most prolific correspondent. The son born to her and Daniel had not survived infancy and the couple moved back to Tonbridge, where Daniel was buried in 1721, broken in health and, we might surmise, possibly financially as well in the South Sea Bubble, for he left Mary no land in his will.³¹ For some years Mary herself had to stay with the Hoopers at Lyons House, where we found her in 1728 speculating as to whether William Austen was married or not. Certainly at that time it was not a happy household. No-one seemed to like George Hooper's old father, also George, very much: surly, tight-fisted, prone to what were described as 'fits', he kept his daughter-in-law pitifully short of housekeeping money and refused to attend his grandson John's christening. As a welcome break from it Mary would visit her Tilden relatives in Putney: her sister-in-law Rose and the attorney George Tilden of Clement's Inn.³² He was the George Tilden to whom Mary's nephew Francis Austen is known to have been apprenticed in 1714.³³ For Elizabeth Austen her sister Mary's marriage had evidently provided the introduction she needed to secure that legal apprenticeship for her second son which led to his subsequent rise to fortune.

Most of the correspondence is between relatives of the third generation prior to Jane Austen, written in middle and old age. But it adds a degree of colour and intimacy to our picture of the environment in and around Tonbridge in which George Austen grew up. Long, newsy, sometimes gossipy, the letters were written many years before the first surviving Tonbridge newspaper and do much to fill the gap. Gilbert Hoole has rightly remarked on the extremely close-knit nature of Tonbridge gentry society. This made its mark on George Austen's family and created relationships which he maintained throughout his own life. Here we can witness some of those family alliances and relationships with which we have become familiar, but still in the process of formation. Reading the correspondence is akin to watching a small-town soap opera. The next generation of Austens, George and Philadelphia, have only very tiny walk-on parts. Of the Austen family no-one emerges in clearer focus than George's supposedly harsh and uncaring uncle, Stephen Austen.

Previously we have been dependent on Anna Lefroy's family history for its picture of Uncle Stephen as a man who resented having to take on responsibility

for his brother William's orphaned children.³⁴ As the picture apparently came directly from George Austen himself, probably a reliable witness, it must have an element of truth. All we can say is that it is definitely too one-sided. Stephen's uncle, aunt, and cousin George Weller, his close friend, all had a high regard for him, George Weller even remarking on his 'universal benevolence'. He was a self-made man, as Mary Tilden could see, with, perhaps, some of the resulting attitudes: nevertheless, it also emerges that he actually possessed an infectious sense of fun.

Possibly he was a difficult man for small children to read. Born in 1704, Stephen never knew his own father. He had his mother to thank for a good education at Sevenoaks, but then, at the age of eighteen, he suffered a cranial injury which required trepanation, the long-term effects of which were thought to have contributed to his early death from an abscess.³⁵ His profession, that of stationer and bookseller in London, must have been full of uncertainties and insecurities: capital would have to be expended on print-runs with unpredictable returns. In his business affairs he was helped by his own uncle, Edward Weller, a generous and sensible man, who invested some of his own capital in Stephen's business, and with whom he remained on good terms for life.

Stephen was also very fortunate in his marriage. We have already seen him shaking his head over his brother William Austen's liaison with Rebecca Hampson. On William's death in 1737 Stephen and his wife Elizabeth had to take on responsibility for their offspring, the youngest of whom, Leonora, was almost certainly physically or mentally handicapped; and they assumed Leonora's burden for the rest of their lives, though later, as Deirdre Le Faye has shown, his widow was helped financially by George and Philadelphia.³⁶ This burden, we would suppose, fell mainly on Stephen's wife, who did not consider her responsibilities at an end when Stephen died at Christmas 1750, but shared them with her second husband John Hinton. Elizabeth had also had sufficient means to help Stephen to pay off his existing debts when he married her in 1729. In London he was in touch with Solomon and Thomas Barton, probably third cousins of his, who also maintained their own connections in the Tonbridge-Hadlow area. That Christmas Thomas Barton joked about Stephen to Edward Weller, 'It's a good thing for a man to be saved by his wife'. Hearing of this, Stephen next wrote to his uncle,

...Mr Barton is a Wag. I have had a letter from Tunbridge & find Mr Barton makes himself merry with me; but I am so used to this sort of mirth that it's very agreeable. Tho I'll take an opportunity to be even with Mr Barton therefore if I bring in his houskeeper. He may thank himself he knowes that exence tho has not courage to venture upon a Wife. I shall tell him so...³⁷

In 1734, as the Duke of Dorset's agent, Francis Austen was active in organizing the Whigs' campaign for the election of the Duke's son, Lord Middlesex, and Sir George Oxenden, to the two parliamentary seats for the knights of the shire of Kent. In August he gave his brother Stephen the responsibility of printing

the results of the election in a poll book which, before the secret ballot, listed how each individual member of the qualifying Kent electorate had cast his vote. Stephen's uncle Edward collected the names of subscribers and put down £100 towards this, and work started on the printing before the end of the month. Then, after the duke's candidates had lost to the Tories, Edward Weller was 'much surprised' to read in both the *Maidstone Weekly Journal* of 10 October 1734 and the Canterbury paper that (as he wrote to Stephen):

...an Account that the late Poll for the County of Kent would be speedily publish'd with an Humorous Copper Plate and an Introductory Preface. I hope they have no Foundation for their Incerting th[a]t Paragraff – and if they have, hope you will well consider of it before you suffer it to be done, for if it be printed with reflection upon one Party you will be sure to have the resentment of the other, and believe 'twill please only the Violent & Noisy of any, whereas if you print it without Plate or preface, as I believe your subscribers expected it would, you will preserve the Friendship of both. Besides I think you ought to consider how your Brother may suffer by his letting you have the Copy of the Poll, for let him be ever so Innozent of the reflections yet he will be blamed, and you must consider the loosing side is not neer so good humour'd as the winner and I wish he may not fall under the Duke [of Dorset]'s displeasure by it ...

Stephen took his uncle's advice, 'as I know it is meant very kindly'. The poll-book's frontispiece was printed soberly, without reflection or Copperplate, though, as we too might feel at this distance, he obviously thought it was rather a pity (**Plate 17**). The copperplate, he replied, was only intended for ornament, it should not have offended anyone.³⁸ Nevertheless, with an eye to business, he did take the opportunity to include at the back of the poll book a lengthy advertisement listing all the books printed for him and available at his shop, the Angel and Bible in St Paul's Churchyard. It was a huge variety of material, including the texts of various scientific tracts, a number of Restoration comedies, and a still quite new novel, entitled *Gulliver's Travels*.

A correspondence of this nature can provide multiple perspectives, for instance of the sometimes tense relationship between Robert Weller and his son George, seen not only from the viewpoints of the parties but from Mary Tilden's too. As for Jane Austen herself, such networks of family relationships became the stuff of her art as well as her life. We can now begin to detect a support network beyond Uncle Francis, with a care to the welfare of the orphaned George Austen and his sisters. His character would have developed differently had he suffered indifference and neglect. Life with his uncle Stephen, the environment of his home town and school, and then his Oxford college, must each have shaped his view of the world: his religion, his politics, his sense of social standing, and his intellectual horizons. To a certain degree, these would also have helped to define and particularize the world-view of his daughter, with implications for the scope

and subject-matter of her writing. ‘Burn my letters’, Mary Tilden repeatedly enjoined her brother Edward Weller. It is hoped that a wider readership will eventually have cause to be grateful that in this, and perhaps in this only, he failed to comply with his sister’s instructions – or at least in the case of over ninety of them he failed.

Notes

- 1 CKS, Knatchbull MSS, U951 C75/1.
- 2 CKS, Knatchbull MSS, U951 C75/2.
- 3 Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 270-83.
- 4 CKS, Knatchbull MSS, U951 C81 and E15.
- 5 CKS, Knatchbull MSS, U951 C112/1-5, published in *Jane Austen’s Letters*, 3rd edn, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, nos. 109 (pp. 278-82), 114 (pp. 285-87), 151 (pp. 328-31), 153 (pp. 331-34), 155 (pp. 335-37).
- 6 CKS, Knatchbull MSS, U951 F24/1-69.
- 7 CKS, Knatchbull MSS, U951 C102-108.
- 8 Further correspondence of Fanny, Lady Knatchbull, survives in U951 C109-114; reflections of her husband, Sir Edward Knatchbull, in his private notes, U951 F20; and correspondence between them from the time of their engagement, in U951 C75. See also Deirdre Le Faye, *Fanny Knight’s Diaries: Jane Austen through her Niece’s Eyes* (Chawton, 2000) and Margaret Wilson, *Almost Another Sister – The Story of Fanny Knight, Jane Austen’s favourite niece* (Maidstone, 1990, revised edn, 1998).
- 9 The Civic Society’s work is described in Robert Austin, *Today’s Tonbridge: Tonbridge Civic Society’s first 40 years* (Tonbridge, 2003).
- 10 G.H.Tucker, *A Goodly Heritage: a history of Jane Austen’s family* (Manchester, 1983) apparently derived some information from Hoole’s research, but was published first.
- 11 CKS, H.W.Knocker collection, U55 T432; G.P.Hoole, *A Tonbridge Miscellany*, p. 78.
- 12 Margaret Wilson, *Jane Austen’s family and Tonbridge* (Chawton, 2001), p.19.
- 13 Le Faye, *Family Record*, p. 3.
- 14 As the majority of this property was sold by George Austen in November 1768 to Elizabeth Hooker (already a tenant), she took custody of the original deeds, subject to a covenant to produce them to Thomas Slatter. C.f. CKS U55 T442.
- 15 CKS, SS. Peter and Paul Tonbridge register, P371/1/6; Gilbert Hoole and William Jarvis, ‘William Walter’, in *Jane Austen Society Collected Reports 1976-1985*, pp. 344-46.
- 16 ‘The Trench’ or ‘Upper Trench’ in the parish registers indicates the locality within this large parish, while the house name ‘New Trench’ can be found south-west of Shipbourne village on the first edition Ordnance Survey map.
- 17 Hoole, *A Tonbridge Miscellany*, p. 78.
- 18 The National Archives, PROB 11/630.
- 19 CKS, DRb/ Pwr 31, ff. 205-210; P371/1/6, in which George Walter’s burial was recorded on 13 October 1703 and Sarah Walter’s on 28 February 1723.

- 20 Mary Tilden to Edward Weller, in CKS, Weller correspondence, U1000/18 C1/12.
- 21 Not 11 September, as in R.A.Austen-Leigh, *Pedigree of Austen* (London, 1940).
- 22 As is clear from an exchange of correspondence between Lord Stanhope and the Revd James Edward Austen-Leigh – Stanhope had expressed disappointment that Austen-Leigh had not published her last work, the *St Swithin* verses (CKS, Stanhope of Chevening MSS., U1590 C402/32; Le Faye, *Family Record*, p.283) – and his acquisition of a letter from Jane to John Murray relating to the publication of *Emma* (CKS's 'sixth' Jane Austen letter, contained in U1590 C474, and published in *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Le Faye, no. 124 [p.295]).
- 23 D.W.Smithers, *Jane Austen in Kent* (Westerham, 1981) pp. 37-56, esp. 47-50; CKS, Chevening parish records, P88/3/1-2.
- 24 Jane Payne, née Hampson, was appointed in John-Cope senior's will in such a circumstance (D. Le Faye, *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her family* [Cambridge, 2006], p. 14, family tree 6.)
- 25 Le Faye, *Family Record*, pp.19, 41; R.Vick, 'The Hancocks', in *Jane Austen Society Report* 1999, p. 20.
- 26 *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Le Faye, p.526.
- 27 B. Keith-Lucas, 'Francis and Francis Motley Austen, Clerks of the Peace for Kent' in *Studies in Modern Kentish History*, ed. A.Detsicas and N.Yates (Maidstone, 1983), pp. 87-102.
- 28 CKS, Papillon MSS., U1015 C75, C77, *passim*; C124, Q10, Q16; Deborah Kaplan, 'Henry Austen and John Rawston Papillon', in *Jane Austen Society Collected Reports 1986-1995*, pp. 60-4; Wilson, *Jane Austen's family and Tonbridge*, pp. 46-7.
- 29 Hoole, *A Tonbridge Miscellany*, p. 53-58; *Papers relating to proceedings in the county of Kent, 1642-1646*, ed. Richard Almack (Camden Society 1854).
- 30 Online catalogue to Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, HA 519.
- 31 Guildhall Library, St Dunstan in the East parish register MS 7857/3; CKS, P371/1/6; TNA, PROB 11/579 (ff. 213v-214).
- 32 Apparently cousins, Rose Tilden, Daniel's sister, and George Tilden, originally from Brede, Sussex, were married at All Hallows London Wall in December 1697. George's origin in Brede and admission to Clements Inn in 1690 are clear from its pension book: Selden Society, vol. 68 (1960). We owe these references, and the Sussex one in note 33, to Christopher Whittick.
- 33 Wilson, *Jane Austen's family and Tonbridge*, p.16. Francis Austen's apprenticeship to George Tilden is confirmed in his witnessing of a deed of 1715, in which he is clearly acting as Tilden's clerk (East Sussex RO, AMS 5729/22).
- 34 Le Faye, *Family Record*, p.3; Wilson, *Jane Austen's family and Tonbridge*, p.21.
- 35 CKS, U1000/18 C1/206, 208.
- 36 D. Le Faye, 'Leonora Austen', in *Jane Austen Society Report*, 1998, pp. 54-7.
- 37 CKS, U1000/18 C1/52, 55.
- 38 Keith-Lucas, pp. 90-91; CKS, U1000/18 C2/1, C1/85; *The Poll for knights of the shire to represent the county of Kent*, printed for Stephen Austen (1734).

Appendix 1.

The Austen family in the Kent Archives: potential research sources

Knatchbull MSS (U951) *

Weller MSS (U38)

Woodgate MSS (U1050)

Papillon MSS (U1015)

H.W.Knocker collection (U55)

Parish records: Chevening (P88), Horsmonden (P192), Shipbourne (P334), SS Peter & Paul, Tonbridge (P371), etc *

Brook Bridges MSS (East Kent Archives Centre, EK-U373,* EK-U1496)

Sackville MSS (U269) *

Gordon Ward collection (U442) *: especially Claridge book (B2); Grovehurst manorial records

Diocese of Rochester: probate and ordination records (DRa, DRb) *

Stanhope of Chevening MSS (U1590) *

Lennard MSS (U312)

Barrett-Lennard MSS (U1384, U1450) *

Farnaby-Austen MSS (U1000/1)

Austen MSS (U47/1)

Messrs Murton, Clarke & Murton-Neale (U78)

Records of the Kent Clerk of the Peace (Q/C) *

Streatfeild MSS (U908) *

Argles & Court deeds (U1080)

Snell & Co, Goudhurst (U769): manorial records of Goudhurst area

Faversham Corporation unofficial collections (U390): royal licence on Edward Austen's assuming the name and arms of Knight

Weller correspondence (U1000/18): re-cataloguing in progress

Messrs Knocker and Foskett, originally Austen & Claridge (U1490): uncatalogued

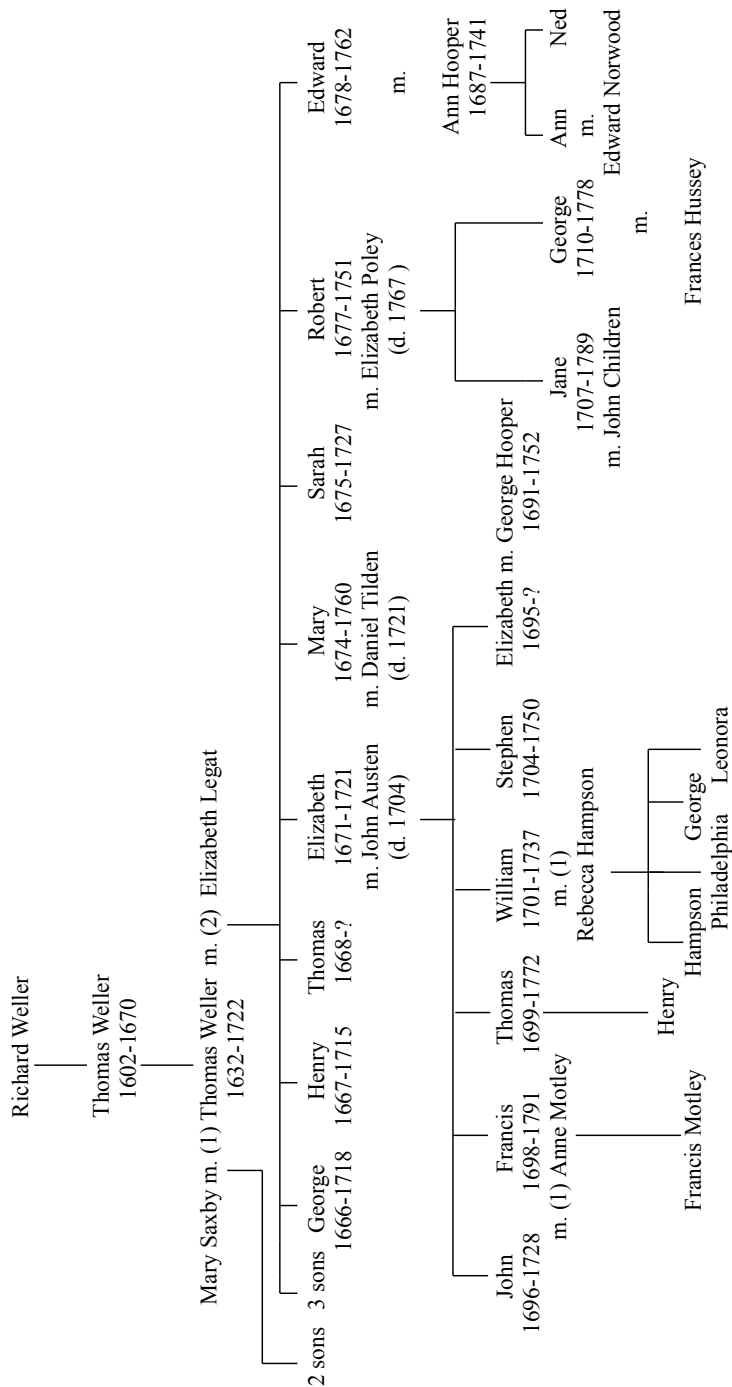
Canon Brade-Birks papers, deeds of Godmersham etc (R.Launcefield collection, U2533): uncatalogued

Harrison family of Denne Hill, Kingston (U3861): diaries of Charlotte Branfill, née Brydges, and Jemima Branfill): uncatalogued

Notes

- 1 Online catalogues of the archive collections marked with an asterisk may be seen on the Access to Archives part of the National Archives' website (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a)
- 2 Prior appointment with an archivist is necessary in order to view archives which are uncatalogued or in the process of being catalogued.

Appendix 2: The Weller and Austen families



The bells at Chawton Church

Michael D. Sanders

Bells and bell ringing have played an important role in the social history of England, so much so that Bishop Latimer in 1552 said that if ‘all the bells in England were rung at one time there would scarcely be a single spot where a bell would not be heard’. This might have occurred with an invasion or some other major emergency, but bells are usually associated with worship. Marriages and christenings are celebrated and deaths were often announced by nine rings for a man, six for a woman and three for a child. The earliest bells occurred in the 13th century, though some may have been earlier, and Hampshire has examples of these early bells and indeed is able to muster a total of 98 mediaeval bells. Thus the story of the Chawton bells is of some historical interest and provides a tangible reminder of the continuity of this village.

Up to the 14th century bells were hung on a simple spindle and chimed by pulling a rope attached to it. Improvements were made with the use of a quarter wheel attached to the spindle, and this progressed to a half wheel, and finally the full wheel. The Reformation resulted in the loss of many bells, but these were often replaced with full wheels, which gave the ringer greater control. Further modifications led to ‘change ringing’ or the ability to ring special sequences, which are termed ‘methods’. Change ringing remained an essentially English mode of ringing and was not a feature on the Continent. Smaller churches usually had three bells but in the larger churches the number might increase to ten. In the middle of the 14th century Winchester had 48 churches each with its own bells, but post Reformation there were only four in the City and seven in the outlying area.

The earliest Chawton Bell was cast in 1420 at Wokingham with the inscription ‘Sancta Maria ora pro nobis’, a common inscription at that time. Another bell was cast at this time with the inscription ‘Sancte Nicholai ora pro nobis’ in order to pay respect to St Nicholas, the patron Saint of pilgrims. The next bell was cast in 1621 by Henry Knight from Reading. There were no bell foundries in Hampshire in those days and none subsequently, but Hampshire churches obviously had a high demand. Some bells were cast at the foundry, but others were cast close to the church by itinerant groups. A hole four foot square and three feet deep was dug. A core was constructed in the hole consisting of central bricks, covered with clay; this was moulded into the shape of a bell and then covered with grease and more clay. This clay is called loam, a combination of sand, clay, goat hair and horse manure, which has been used since early times because it is malleable when damp, but hard when dry. The hair and manure evaporate with heat, allowing toxic gases to escape. A cope or outer cover is made in a similar manner, and this was ultimately placed over the core. A large cauldron placed near the hole was filled with appropriate metal objects and the broken bell, if one was being

replaced; the cauldron was then heated by a great fire and the molten metal poured into the mould formed between the core and the cope. It is probable that the Chawton bells were produced at the foundry rather than at the church. These three bells would have been heard by Jane Austen when she attended regularly, and sat in the pews allocated to Edward's family at the Great House.

In 1748 the West end of the church and the tower were in a ruinous state and it was suggested that two of the bells should be sold to finance the reconstruction. A letter was duly sent to the Bishop of Winchester by the Revd John Hinton of Chawton Lodge. The Bishop, Benjamin Hoadby, was 'a prelate more conspicuous for friendly good nature than for love of church order or dignity of worship'; he accepted the proposal and to save Chawton money did not refer it to the Faculty. Hearing these suggestions the other landowner in Chawton, a Mr Prowting, raised a clamour in the streets and 'took to horse', riding to London to confront the Bishop. The plan was rejected and the three bells remained in the belfry.

This old church was demolished and the present one built in the early 1870s, and in 1884 four new bells were cast by Thomas C. Lewis of Brixton. Two of the old bells were re-hung and one of the 1420 bells was recast; this must have been the bell dedicated to 'Sancte Nicholai', because this one disappeared at that time. The new bells were cast in memory of Isabella Barbara Shaw Stewart, who 'fell asleep' on 4 August 1883 at Chawton House. The new bells never reached a satisfactory musical level, probably because they were cast by a firm mainly concerned with the manufacture of church organs. In bells the tin content can be critical, with too much tin producing early cracking, and too little producing a softer alloy, so this may have been a factor (copper 77% and tin 23%).

The six bells had the following inscriptions:

6. Her children rise up and call her blessed	1884
5. Henry Knight made mee	1621
4. Her husband also and he praiseth her	1884
3. Sancta Maria ora pro nobis	1420
2. O come let us worship	1884
1. We praise thee O God	1884

In 2000 the Friends of Chawton Church were established to provide extra funds for the church, and to raise revenue from residents who were not necessarily regular churchgoers. Regular lectures were held in the winter months by distinguished speakers from the world of art, literature, natural history and science. However in 2005 the church tower was deemed unsafe and all bell-ringing was abandoned. A decision was therefore taken to repair the tower and cast six new bells and hang the two old bells (which Jane Austen would have heard) for individual ringing. This was timed to coincide with the bicentenary celebrations of Jane Austen's arrival in Chawton. Although the actual date was 9 July 1809, the main celebrations were timed to accompany the Annual General Meeting of the Jane Austen Society, held on 18 July. Local donors were therefore sought to donate a



The bells after their removal from the tower



*Richard Knight, President of the Jane Austen Society with the bell of 1621
(photo by Peter Wright).*

bell, and this provided four. A further bell was donated by the Chawton House Library (Sandy Lerner) and the final one was contributed by charity functions in the village and local village donors. This last bell was dedicated to the Patron saint of the church St Nicholas, to replace the bell from 1420 that had been recast. The other bell of 1420 was repaired and mended through the generosity of members of the Jane Austen Society, with special donations from the Scottish and Northern Branches. The bell of 1621 was similarly mended by the generosity of the Jane Austen Societies of North America and Australia, with special donations from Canada and Melbourne.

The new bells were cast by Taylors of Loughborough. The Taylors learnt their trade at St Neots in Huntingdon, before moving to Oxford and thence to Loughborough in 1840, casting there for almost 170 years. Since the firm has recently been forced into closure, the Chawton Bells may be some of the last bells cast at this famous foundry. The tower has been repaired, the new bells hung and the musical tone of the bells deemed to be of the highest order. The dedication was performed by the Rt Reverend Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Winchester at the annual Evensong for the Jane Austen Society, and the service was conducted by the rector, the Revd Tony Pears.

The inscriptions on the bells are:

1. 'To those who went before us' Chawton House Library
2. 'Sancte Nicolai ora pro nobis' Given by Chawton Villagers
3. Given by the Robertson Family. Chawton Park Farm.
4. Given by the Whitaker Family. The Dower House.
5. Given by N.Kerridge Esq Prowtings
[and] A.N. Fuller Esq Southfields Farm
6. Given by the Sanders Family. Chawton Lodge

The two ancient bells were hung for individual ringing, so that they could be used for special events, without summoning the full team of bellringers.

Thus it is hoped that the bells and the tower will serve Chawton well over the coming centuries. The Friends of Chawton Church provided the inspiration and the finances. The Revd Tony Pears was highly supportive, and was aided by the enthusiasm of Mr Roger Barber, and the skills of Mr Matthew Higby. A new team of bellringers is being assembled and a new young and enthusiastic Tower Captain installed, Miss Emma Rouse (*Like a breath of summer laden, like a cheery ray of hope / Is the sight of gentle maiden, deftly handling of a rope*).

The manuscript works after fifty years and into the future

Brian Southam

‘... our comprehension of dead writers must pierce a mist of ever-thickening gloom.’ R.W.Chapman, *The Portrait of a Scholar and Other Essays written in Macedonia 1916-1918* (1920), p. 64.

It was just over fifty years ago – to be exact, in 1954 – that the Oxford University Press completed its edition of Jane Austen with the publication of volume six, *Minor Works*. This *diminuendo* title concealed its real importance, for what the great Austen editor R.W. Chapman gave to the world was then the first complete edition of Jane Austen’s surviving literary manuscripts.¹

Over the previous thirty years, between the 1920s and 1951, Oxford had published the individual manuscripts, all of them edited by Chapman.² In that sense, at least, the *Minor Works* volume of 1954 contained nothing new. What it did provide, however, was the first comprehensive overview of the surviving literary material; and in this respect it opened a fresh and revealing perspective. It presented all the known manuscripts in a single chronological sequence that extended over the entire length of Jane Austen’s writing career, a period of thirty years. She was scrupulous in preserving her childhood writing, pieces dating from about 1787, when she was 11 or 12; and to the end of her life she was equally scrupulous in keeping the manuscripts of her unfinished works and the smaller items written over the course of thirty years to entertain the family. From 1817, the year of her death, we have the opening chapters to *Sanditon*, what would have been the beginning of her seventh novel; and, a few months later, her very last work of all, written on her death-bed, verses on the Winchester horse races, a poem remarkably accomplished, vigorous, and edged with a fine sardonic humour.³ The only substantial manuscript Chapman omitted from *Minor Works* was the original ending to *Persuasion*, the two ‘cancelled’ chapters which he had edited and published on its own in 1926, a text which Oxford eventually added to the *Persuasion* volume in 1963.⁴

So *Minor Works* delivered a considerable body of work, representing every period of Jane Austen’s writing career, a corpus which is in some ways ancillary to the six great novels, in some ways wholly independent of them. Quite apart from their intrinsic literary and historical importance, two of the manuscripts focus our attention upon the writer at work. This is not the case with the three notebooks – *Volume the First*, *Second* and *Third* – in which Jane Austen gathered her childhood pieces. These, together with *Lady Susan*, are fair copies made some years after their original composition and carry only minor changes and corrections, plus a few revisions and updatings entered later; whereas the two unfinished novels, *The Watsons* and *Sanditon*, are works-in-progress which carry

the evidence needed to reconstruct their process of composition. In 1923, Virginia Woolf declared ‘that of all great writers’ Jane Austen ‘is the most difficult to catch in the act of greatness’.⁵ However, in these two manuscripts we can trace the successive stages of first drafting and immediate correction, followed by later revision. Before us, on the manuscript pages, are the insertions, cancellations, alterations and changes of hand that these different stages entail – a process of reworking and refinement that takes us at least some of the way towards glimpsing that elusive ‘act’. One can regret that these textual changes are not recorded in the *Minor Works* volume. But Chapman judged this to be an acceptable omission as the changes were already recorded in his individual volumes, and in his Preface to *Minor Works* he refers ‘the student’ to these editions.⁶

Altogether, then, the *Minor Works* volume created the opportunity for a reappraisal of the literary manuscripts. Deliberately or otherwise, it was an opportunity Chapman left wide open. A shrewd and perceptive critic, he was also unduly modest and chose to confine himself to an editorial role that can properly be described as discreet. Having established accurate texts and set them before the reader, thereafter he opted to do little more than trace the source of some of the literary quotations and obvious allusions. Of the explanatory historical notes that are nowadays standard to scholarly editions, there are very few. Chapman’s judgment on the matter was forthright. In his Preface to *Minor Works* he announced that ‘These immature or fragmentary fictions call for hardly any comment’.⁷

To our ears, this remark may sound dismissive. Put in context, however, it loses some of its edge. Firstly, we should remember that the *Minor Works* volume was a very late addition to Oxford’s existing edition of the six novels, which dated from 1923. An important feature of the Oxford edition – and greatly prized by Chapman – was the group of Appendices treating social, cultural and literary matters of Jane Austen’s period; and Chapman could assume that anyone reading the *Minor Works* volume would be familiar with these earlier volumes and would be referring to them. Moreover, in Chapman’s view the editor’s prime responsibility lay not in assisting the reader with detailed explanatory notes and lengthy introductions but in carrying out his duty to the author in preserving the fidelity of the text. This resolve, ‘a pious duty’ he called it – ‘To restore, and maintain in its integrity the text of our great writers’ – he carried with him from the rigours of active service in the Great War.⁸ We should remember, too, that alongside his pioneering work in Austen studies Chapman was also a Johnsonian scholar. He was well aware of Johnson’s contempt for notes as ‘necessary evils’ that (in Johnson’s words) refrigerate the mind.⁹ On these principles, Chapman kept the editorial apparatus to the *Minor Works* volume to an absolute minimum. Taken together, the notes and introductions to the individual manuscripts amount to no more than an essential ten pages or so, plus a further ten pages of Indexes to the Characters, Real Persons, Places, Authors and Books.

As to the texts, Chapman left them unmediated, for readers to engage with as manuscripts. He made no attempt to provide trouble-free reading versions. Jane Austen’s idiosyncrasies of spelling, capitalisation, paragraphing and so on,

he intended to leave unchanged. Regarding punctuation, he had declared his view bluntly back in 1923: that 'to modernize is – in however small a degree – to falsify'.¹⁰ He respected the status of *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* as works-in-progress, unfinished and unfinalised. Taking into account Jane Austen's corrections and revisions to these manuscripts, Chapman explained in *Minor Works* that he was providing texts that were faithful to 'what seems to have been' Jane Austen's 'final intention'.¹¹

For the sake of the record, however, some qualification is needed here. Chapman's ambitions regarding strict accuracy were frustrated. Although he was a good reader of the manuscripts, anyone who studies his texts of *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* alongside the actual manuscripts will find several hundred discrepancies: where, for example, Jane Austen's habitual use of the ampersand sign '&' has been rendered as 'and'; and *vice versa*, where Jane Austen's 'and' has been given as an ampersand; where Jane Austen's unconventional placing of apostrophes has been regularised; where points regularly included by Jane Austen in 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.' are omitted; where there are variations in hyphenation; where initial capitals and lower case forms have been varied; and where her distinctive mark of punctuation at the end of sentences, a dash, either in front of, or behind the full stop, has been reduced to a full stop alone. Of course, these changes can be regarded as trivial. They pass by most readers unnoticed and cause them no inconvenience whatsoever. They do not involve the mistranscription of words and they have only a marginal bearing on the meaning or literary aspect of these works. Nonetheless, for anyone concerned with this material in its manuscript state, that is to say in the precise and distinctive form in which Jane Austen left these works, they are significant changes.

Similar issues arise in Chapman's text of *Lady Susan*. This survives as a fair copy made by Jane Austen some years after the original, possibly for circulation amongst the family or for reading aloud in the family circle. For the most part, Jane Austen laid out the text as it would appear in print, with careful attention to paragraphing and the separation of speech, so that in sections of dialogue each speaker commences on a new line. However, in Chapman's text of 1923, which the *Minor Works* text follows verbatim, there are passages where Jane Austen's system of paragraphing and speech demarcation disappears, the text is run together, and we face solid and undivided areas of print.¹²

We have no idea how all this came about, who was responsible for these changes or at what stage they were introduced. Was it simply a matter of Chapman's carelessness? This may seem unlikely, since Chapman, a classicist by training and a publisher by profession, was a man whose habit of mind was exacting over matters of detail, textual minutiae most of all. Was it ignorance or indifference or downright fatigue on the part of the typist working from Chapman's handwritten transcript of the manuscript? Even for his colleagues, his hand was notoriously difficult to decipher. Or was it carelessness on the part of the printer? And how was it that these discrepancies were overlooked in the proofs, by Chapman or whomsoever? Although we have no firm answer to these

questions, one explanation could lie in the fact that at the very time Chapman was establishing his reputation as the world's leading authority on Jane Austen (whom he had come to secondarily, following his primary interest in Dr Johnson) he was also running the Oxford University Press, of which he had been Secretary to the Delegates – equivalent to our modern CEO – since 1920. Whatever the explanation, there was some gremlin in the Oxford works.

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It could be said that in the stark minimalism of the *Minor Works* volume Chapman left an open invitation to textual critics, biographers, literary and cultural historians and to anyone else who wanted to explore this body of work. It was an invitation soon accepted, and over the next fifty years and into the present day the *Minor Works* volume has served as the foundation for selections, critical studies and a multitude of articles.¹³ This activity has culminated in the two final volumes in the Cambridge edition of Jane Austen: in 2006, the *Juvenilia*, a piece of exemplary editing by Peter Sabor; and, published at the end of 2008, the *Later Manuscripts* volume, edited by Janet Todd and Linda Bree. As against the economy of Chapman's *Minor Works*, just under five hundred pages in length, the two volumes of the Cambridge edition deliver virtually the same body of manuscript material in over fourteen hundred pages. This striking difference is largely accounted for by the extent of the Cambridge editorial apparatus, essentially a detailed historical and critical surround delivered in the form of introductions, explanatory notes and appendices. The texts are newly collated from the manuscripts; and in the Appendices *Later Manuscripts* include transcriptions of *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* rendering the manuscripts line-by-line and page-by-page. On the face of it, these transcriptions could be regarded as even more helpful than facsimiles, since the editors have the opportunity to elucidate words and lines so heavily worked over as to be virtually indecipherable.¹⁴ Having said that, we should also enter a note of caution, since no set of readings, including those from Cambridge, are to be regarded as definitive; alternative readings, equally plausible, are possible for some of the cancelled material.

A feature of *Later Manuscripts* that has been much discussed is the editorial decision to present the primary texts of the two unfinished works – *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* – not as Jane Austen left them but in 'reading' versions, as the editors call them. They explain that these reading texts are 'discreetly edited to reflect basic publishing conventions of the early nineteenth century', 'conventions' based upon the evidence of '[Jane] Austen's own published works'.¹⁵ Thus these Cambridge texts of *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* are editorial constructs, what we might describe as hypothetical texts projected for a notional existence. The problem thus created is clear: as-for-publication editing is wholly incompatible with the essential nature of these two fragments as manuscript works-in-progress. These are manuscripts in a transitional state, *en route* to completion and eventual publication but still far from that finished state. We have no firm basis for judging what further changes Jane Austen might have made on returning to these opening

sections once the stories were brought to a conclusion, changes which could have been as radical and widespread as those she made to the ending of *Persuasion*. So an editorial treatment that confers an impress of finality is seriously misjudged. For a 'scholarly' edition, as this is described by Cambridge, the editors would have been better advised to have taken a conservative line, as Chapman did, only giving what could be construed as Jane Austen's 'final intention' at that point in time, taking into account the manuscript corrections and revisions, and – as Chapman hoped he was doing – retaining the distinctive features of Jane Austen's style in spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and paragraphing.

Alternatively, in choosing not to follow Chapman's 'final intention' principle, the Cambridge editors might perhaps have provided a substantial note on the text, sifting these issues thoroughly, referring to what previous editors had done, and weighing the pros and cons involved in their own decision. Just such a discussion, which passes unmentioned in *Later Manuscripts*, was conducted thirty years ago by John Davie in the Oxford World's Classics edition of *Northanger Abbey*, *Lady Susan*, *The Watsons*, *Sanditon* (1980). Amongst other approaches, Davie considers the very treatment favoured by Cambridge – 'normalizing the text along lines which the editor presumes would have been followed in publication' – only to reject it: 'to normalize the "Minor Works" to this extent involves guesswork and runs the risk of departing from Jane Austen's intentions in some points of substance'.¹⁶

In the General Editor's Preface to the Cambridge edition (which appears at the head of the *Juvenilia* and *Later Manuscripts* volumes as it does in the individual novels), Janet Todd refers to 'the author's own chosen style' – but one might argue that it is precisely Jane Austen's 'chosen style' which lies buried beneath the Cambridge reading texts of *The Watsons* and *Sanditon*.¹⁷ Chapman's decision was in the opposite direction, with the consequence that *Minor Works* presents these texts for what they are, unmistakably works-in-progress, unmistakably direct transcripts of Jane Austen's written word, unmistakably her 'chosen style'.

Against this major reservation on the textual side, we have to welcome the scope of the Cambridge editorial apparatus. On the score of sheer information, it establishes a new point of departure, enlarging the reader's understanding of the material world of Regency England and the habits, customs and fashions of its gentlemanly and rising middle classes. This is a context that extends from the highly literary elements of *Lady Susan* to the monetary, economic and medical issues raised in *Sanditon*: the earlier work born out of the social and literary culture of the late eighteenth-century; *Sanditon*, a distinctly post-war novel, dramatising the energies of the late Regency, a work whose driving forces are the capitalist dynamics of speculation, investment and consumerism, and in which Jane Austen's familiar comedy of hypochondria reaches new heights of comic extravagance.

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Alongside the Cambridge edition, a further important resource is the new Oxford edition of the manuscript works prepared by Professor Kathryn Sutherland. This presents facsimiles of all the known literary manuscripts, amounting to

approximately eleven hundred manuscript pages, and largely overcomes the problem of studying material which is physically frail and not available for sustained access. The edition is available in both digital and print versions, with the electronic version fully searchable, opening the way to a more intense study of Jane Austen's working practices than has been possible hitherto. Three further points about the Sutherland edition: the facsimiles are accompanied by transcriptions; there is explanatory annotation; and an essay treats the genesis and composition of the manuscript works and their relationship to the six novels. Overall, this edition builds upon the important discussion of the manuscripts in Kathryn Sutherland's recent study, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*.

*

Looking to the future, there are a number of specific questions which these new editions will help us to resolve or, at least, to clarify. One of these concerns the date of composition for *Lady Susan*, a highly accomplished work of deceptively precocious maturity. On this question the manuscript itself offers little help, since this is not the original but a transcription, probably a reading copy, made by Jane Austen some years later. Jane's niece, Caroline Mary Craven Austen, stated that it was an early work, and the generally accepted view is that it follows on directly from the last of the juvenilia, giving us composition around 1793-94.

Another specific question arises from the literary-historical aspect of *Sanditon*: did Jane Austen conceive of *Sanditon* as a 'resort' novel? Looking back to the eighteenth century, we find that 'resort' has two slightly different applications. The earliest resorts were the traditional inland spas or watering places, headed by Bath, Cheltenham, Harrogate and, mentioned in both *Northanger Abbey* and *Sanditon*, Tunbridge Wells. Visitors came to drink from the springs and bathe in the waters. Over time, the medical or curative aspect became less important and visitors were increasingly drawn by the pleasure of good company and the Assembly Rooms, just as we see in *Northanger Abbey*. However, in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Bath began to lose something of its social *cachet*, its public entertainments were spurned by good society, and those with social pretensions, such as Sir Walter Elliot and the Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple and her daughter Miss Carteret in *Persuasion*, turned inwards to the select pleasure of exclusive private parties with chosen guests.

The second type of resort, the seaside resort, emerged in the mid-eighteenth century when the medicinal value of sea-water and sea air became recognised. Headed by Brighton, Weymouth and Lyme Regis on the south and south-west coast, these resorts flourished under royal patronage; socially, they were soon to eclipse the inland watering places. Over the next forty or fifty years, their growing popularity created opportunities for commercial investment. Local landowners along the coast were quick to spot the opportunity for profit. Sometimes joined by bankers and other outside investors, they set about the modernisation and development of long-established fishing villages, exactly as Jane Austen describes the transformation taking place at Sanditon.

To my knowledge, however, no-one has yet identified the resort novel, in particular the seaside resort novel, as composing a distinct sub-genre; and it follows from this that no attempt has been made to trace its history, which certainly extends over half a century, beginning with the brief account of Scarborough in Smollett's *Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) and continuing, towards the end of this period, with Thomas Skinner Surr's *The Magic of Wealth* (1815). The latter popular work in part recounts the investment made by a rich tradesman turned banker, a Mr Flim-Flam,¹⁹ in the erection of his namesake resort, Flimflampton – reminiscent of a real speculator, Mr Hotham, who had turned the Sussex fishing village of Bognor into fashionable Hothampton in the 1790s – and there are some grounds for believing that *The Magic of Wealth* was in Jane Austen's mind when, two years later, she set about the creation of her own Sussex resort.²⁰

Literary historians and critics have written a great deal about the direct relationship between *Northanger Abbey* and the Radcliffe school of Gothic fiction. In the same way, a good history of the resort novel would help us to determine whether or not Jane Austen intended *Sanditon* to be read as a work in the resort tradition. It would also help us to judge the extent to which *Sanditon* was to be driven by satirical and romantic impulses, and whether, like *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *The Magic of Wealth*, it was to be read as a condition-of-England novel.

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Finally, I want to turn to two larger areas awaiting re-examination. The first of these, dating from the 1940s, is 'A Critical Theory of Jane Austen's Writings' by Q.D. Leavis, originally published as a series of essays in *Scrutiny*. Even after sixty years this remains one of the most challenging and radical discussions of the manuscript works and their relationship to the six novels and, more widely, to Jane Austen's procedure in the writing of the novels and the economy of her creative process.²¹

According to Mrs Leavis, in writing the six novels Jane Austen drew upon a wide range of sources: principally, her reading, the events of her own life and the lives of her family and friends, and on material recycled from the juvenilia and, in particular, from *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*. As a general proposition, this claim should awaken no surprise; many writers admit to working along these or similar lines. For a speculative construct, however, the 'Critical Theory' moves with an altogether unexpected degree of certainty and its starting point is formulated with remarkable confidence. Mrs Leavis contends that in Jane Austen we have 'a uniquely documented case of the origin and development of artistic expression' and that 'an enquiry into the nature of her genius and the process by which it developed can go very far indeed on sure ground'.²² Mrs Leavis claims it to be a necessary enquiry, since without such a detailed examination of Jane Austen's procedures of composition, 'no criticism of her novels can be just or even safe'.²³ Mrs Leavis maintains that the novels are 'palimpsests though whose surface portions of earlier versions, or of other and earlier compositions quite unrelated, constantly protrude'; and she describes the composition of the novels

in a graphic image, envisaging them as ‘geological structures, the earliest layer going back’ to the earliest of the juvenilia, ‘with subsequent accretions from her reading, her personal life and those lives most closely connected with hers, all recast ... under the pressure of deep disturbances in her own emotional life’.²⁴ This forceful and accretive process Mrs Leavis traces in detail, accounting for the way in which *Mansfield Park*, centrally Mary Crawford, was developed out of *Lady Susan*, which, in turn, according to the ‘Critical Theory’, was in part based on Jane’s observation in the 1790s of the flirtatious behaviour of her cousin Eliza de Feuillide towards her brothers James and Henry.²⁵ More briefly, Mrs Leavis traces the process by which *Emma* was evolved out of *The Watsons*.²⁶ Furthermore, she conjectures that, as for the other five novels, there was also a ‘prototype’ *Persuasion* – now lost – which she places pre-1806.²⁷

Mrs Leavis was not alone in suggesting such processes of recycling: speculations of this kind go as far back as the 1870s.²⁸ And although Chapman was scornful, describing the ‘Critical Theory’ as an ‘ingenious and elaborate construction’, he too allowed that ‘*The Watsons* may be regarded as a sketch for *Emma*’.²⁹ More recently, Margaret Anne Doody claims to have identified prototypes and preliminary sketches in Jane Austen’s early writing.³⁰ Other critics have made use of the ‘Critical Theory’, sometimes embracing it with enthusiasm;³¹ and the recycling process has been traced in further directions. Joseph Wiesenfarth, for example, terms *The Watsons* as a fertile ‘pre-text’, an ample source of characters and scenes that Jane Austen drew upon in the late stages of revising *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* and also in the writing of *Emma* and *Persuasion*.³² Quarrying deeper, Jan Fergus has suggested that ‘*The Watsons* may have developed from [Jane] Austen’s earliest attempt at a novel, “Catharine, or the Bower”’.³³ And excavating deeper still, Olivia Murphy finds ‘echoes’ of ‘Jack and Alice’, one of the very earliest of the juvenilia, as late as in *Persuasion*, a linkage across thirty years.³⁴ Widening the perspective, Kathryn Sutherland guardedly speculates that ‘if it is the case that in revising *Pride and Prejudice* [Jane] Austen absorbed and enlivened aspects of the subject-matter of *The Watsons*, it is even more apparent that in general colouring and in its depiction of physical and emotional constraint – of sheer frustration – the fragment is far closer to *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*’.³⁵

Over fifty years ago, Marvin Mudrick, himself something of an iconoclast, commented that the ‘Critical Theory’ constituted ‘the most iconoclastic, the most confidently documented, and the most comprehensive effort to describe Jane Austen’s method and development’.³⁶ Yet the ‘Theory’ is not the last word. To this day, further knowledge and productive speculation continue to extend our consideration of the literary manuscripts; and with the arrival of the Cambridge and Sutherland editions, there is a strong case for re-examining the full range of fact and theory – recalling that Mrs Leavis’s declared starting point (admirable, it has to be said) was to disabuse the literary world of any illusions about the ‘miraculous’ nature of Jane Austen’s art and to translate the textual ‘facts’ revealed by Chapman ‘into the language of literary criticism’.³⁷

A second broad area calling for revaluation is the feminist reading of Jane Austen. This radical approach dates from the 1970s and was powerfully argued in 1979 by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. The authors chose not to treat the juvenilia as either raw material or apprentice work, in which Jane Austen was seen to be honing her skills as a novelist. Instead, they ask for these early compositions to be recognised as works of individuality, with their own distinctive exuberance and energy, and populated by their own breed of assertive heroines, women who behave 'with indecorous abandon' in a world of the 'zany picaresque' whose orthodoxies are theft, adultery and drunkenness, madness and the murder of mothers and fathers.³⁸ Writing diagnostically, Gilbert and Gubar find in 'Love and Freindship' 'the first hint' of Jane Austen's 'alienation from her culture, especially as that culture described and circumscribed women'.³⁹ It is worth noting, as Peter Sabor comments, that when Gilbert and Gubar 'went on to edit the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*' published in 1985, they chose to represent Jane Austen by 'Love and Freindship' on its own.⁴⁰

Later critics, notably Claudia Johnson, Margaret Drabble, Margaret Anne Doody and Richard Jenkyns, have also pointed to the self-awareness and individuality of the young author. 'The fruit of unparalleled self-assurance', Johnson describes 'her earliest literary productions.... With very little ado, [Jane] Austen proclaims the dignity of her genre as well as the authority of her command over it...' In some of the shorter fragments Drabble finds 'hints of another Jane Austen, a fiercer, wilder, more outspoken, more ruthless writer, with a dark vision of human motivation ... and a breathless, almost manic energy'.⁴¹ Doody likewise: in the juvenilia is 'another [Jane]Austen, a comic writer of harder tone and more fearless satire'; 'Her early writing is rough, violent, sexy, joky. It sparkles with knowingness'. And, yet again, Jenkyns, of the juvenilia: '...they reveal a boisterous, hoydenish, sometimes surreal imagination; they are immensely high-spirited, anarchic, occasionally violent in a cartoonish way, and often hilariously funny'; and he compares Jane Austen early pieces with the work of Sterne, Lear, Ionesco and Monty Python.⁴²

The publication of these works in the Cambridge edition and the resources of the Sutherland edition, open a fresh opportunity for studying this 'other', uninhibited Jane Austen; and not only in isolation, but also alongside the juvenilia of other writers, an association explored in the work of Christine Alexander and other contributors to *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*.⁴³

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Virginia Woolf accounted Jane Austen 'as inscrutable in her small way as Shakespeare in his vast one'; and, more recently, Emily Auerbach, in discussing Woolf's view of Jane Austen, has described her as 'an elusive, slippery, enigmatic figure'.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, while we acknowledge and respect these values, scholarship marches on, not least in studying the paratextual life of the manuscripts and their crucial interface with print culture, areas which seem likely to dominate Jane Austen studies over the next decade.

Chapman had the misfortune to be serving on the Balkan front in 1917 when – in the quotation which heads this essay – he wrote of the ‘ever-thickening gloom’ he visualised as enshrouding our recognition of literature. In the trials of war his mood of resigned pessimism is understandable. But on his return to peacetime Oxford, to the world of publishing and scholarship, and most of all to the intellectual companionship of his wife, Katharine Metcalfe, a fellow-Austenian, his earlier Jane Austen energies and enthusiasms were restored and that ‘ever-thickening gloom’ dispersed – just as today his spirits would be lifted by the prospect, now newly-opened, for the continuation of the work begun long ago in concert with his wife.⁴⁵

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- Sutherland, Kathryn, *Jane Austen’s Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Notes

References to the novels are to R.W. Chapman’s Oxford edition (1923 onwards). The re-issues of 1965-66 onwards contain additional changes by Mary Lascelles

based upon her own observations and notes she found in Chapman's papers.

- 1 To be exact, virtually complete. The texts of eight further poems were discovered or recovered in the following decades; and the manuscript of Jane Austen's dramatisation of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* – long held within the family and supposed the work of James Austen's elder daughter, Anna Lefroy – only came to light and the attribution to Jane Austen made in the late 1970s (*Jane Austen's 'Sir Charles Grandison'*, ed. Brian Southam, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
- 2 *Lady Susan* (1925), *Fragment of a Novel (Sanditon)* (1925), *Two Chapters of Persuasion* (1926), *Plan of a Novel* (1926), *The Watsons* (1927), *Volume the First* (1933), *Volume the Third* (1951): all these volume published Oxford: Clarendon Press; also *Volume the Second*, ed. Brian Southam (1963). As Sutherland (2005) notes, as far back as 1912, the Clarendon Press 'was considering... a complete edition of Jane Austen's works, including the manuscript writings and the letters. All that seemed to be holding it back, before war intervened, were copyright issues, the new Act of 1911 having extended protection to fifty years, thus putting the manuscript writings in Bentley's 1871 edition [J.E.Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, second edition] out of reach until 1921' (p. 26, n. 42).
- 3 Given the title 'Venta' by Chapman in *Minor Works* (1969), pp. 451-52.
- 4 Between 1923 and 1963, the *Persuasion* volume contained 'The Cancelled Chapter (Chap. X.) of "Persuasion"' reprinted, with 'some corrections' made from the manuscript in 1954, from the second edition of the *Memoir*, 1871 (*Persuasion*, p. 253, fifth impression, 1954).
- 5 Virginia Woolf, 'Jane Austen at Sixty', *Nation & Athenaeum*, 15 December 1923.
- 6 *Minor Works*, p. vi.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. v.
- 8 R.W.Chapman (1920), 'To restore, and maintain in its integrity the text of our great writers is a pious duty' (p. 79).
- 9 Samuel Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare* (1765), para 157.
- 10 *Emma*, p. 516.
- 11 *Minor Works* (1954), pp. 314, 363.
- 12 Examples of these discrepancies can be found in *Lady Susan*, Letters 23-24: 1925 text, pp. 101-13; *Minor Works*, pp. 234-39.
- 13 To mention the most notable: a collection of critical and historical articles in *Jane Austen's Beginnings: The Juvenilia and Lady Susan* (1989), ed. J. David Grey (Anne Arbor, UMI Research Press); the twelve Jane Austen titles published by the Juvenilia Press; Margaret Anne Doody's World's Classics edition of *Catharine and other Writings* (1993); Claudia Johnson's World's Classics edition of *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* (2003); and Margaret Drabble's Penguin edition of *Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* (1974). Drabble's Introduction and Notes and her treatment of the text display all the inward grasp and understanding of a fellow-novelist; and

- although this is an edition aimed primarily at non-academic readers, still in print thirty years later, it holds much of value for the student of Jane Austen.
- 14 There is an existing facsimile of *Sanditon*, ed. Brian Southam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). The first transcription: Arthur M. Axelrad, *Jane Austen Caught in the Act of Greatness: A Diplomatic Transcription and Analysis of the the Two Manuscript Chapters of Persuasion and the Manuscript of Sanditon* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2003).
 - 15 *Later Manuscripts*, p. xvi.
 - 16 'Note on the Text', Oxford World's Classics edition of *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* (1980, 2003), p. xxxvi.
 - 17 *Later Manuscripts*, p. xii.
 - 18 Brian Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts* (Oxford: OUP, 1964; sec. edn. London: Athlone, 2001), p. 45; R.W.Chapman, *Jane Austen: Facts and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 49, 52, *Minor Works* (1954), pp. vii, 243; Q.D.Leavis, in *Collected Essays, 1, The Englishness of the English Novel*, ed. G.Singh (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), p. 88; Ellen Moody, [www.google](http://www.google.com): 'A Calendar, Letters in and Sources for *Lady Susan*'; Marilyn Butler, review: David Nokes, *Jane Austen: A Life*, Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life in London Review of Books* (5 March 1998); and see subsequent letters from Brian Southam (*LRB*, 2 April 1998) and Trevor Fawcett (*LRB*, 4 June 1998).
 - 19 According to the *OED*, a 'flim-flam' was 'A piece of nonsense' or 'trick' or an 'attempt at deception'. The term was used by Fielding in *Tom Jones* (1749), 'I tell thee 'tis all flimflam' (XVIII. xii).
 - 20 The Cambridge edition devotes several hundred words to a discussion of Surr's novel and its possible connection with *Sanditon*; but it fails to mention that this suggestion was first raised over forty years ago (see Brian Southam, 'A Source for *Sanditon*?' in the *Jane Austen Society Report* for 1970, p. 30; and enlarged upon in Southam, '*Sanditon*: the Seventh Novel' in ed. Juliet McMaster, *Jane Austen's Achievement* (London: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 17-23.
 - 21 It is worth observing that 'Volume the Third' was published only in 1951 and that there is no evidence that Mrs Leavis was acquainted with its contents.
 - 22 Leavis (1968), vol. 2, p. 1.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
 - 24 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
 - 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 23-65.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 14-20.
 - 27 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
 - 28 See, for example, Anne Thackeray, 'Jane Austen', *Cornhill Magazine* (1871), vol. 34, pp. 158-74; extracts commented on in Southam (1987), pp. 24, 164-70.
 - 29 R.W.Chapman, *Jane Austen: A Critical Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953, sec. edn. 1955), p. 52. Chapman also commented: 'I am also unable to accept the identification of Mary Crawford with J.A.'s cousin and sister-in-law Eliza, on which the argument largely hinges' (pp. 52-53); Chapman (1968), p. 51. Subsequently, Chapman made it clear that he had been unaware

- of Mrs Leavis's 'Critical Theory' (letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 November 1948, p. 653).
- 30 Jane Austen, *Catharine and other Writings*, eds. Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: OUP, 1993), p. xxiv.
 - 31 Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts*, p. 141, notes 5, 6.
 - 32 Wiesenfarth, 'The Watsons as Pretext', *Persuasions* (1986), vol. 8, p. 109.
 - 33 Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen: A Literary Life* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 115.
 - 34 Olivia Murphy, 'From Pammydiddle to *Persuasion*: Jane Austen Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Literature', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol.32, no. 2, Spring 2008), p.33.
 - 35 Sutherland (2005), p. 141.
 - 36 Marvin Mudrick, *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 260.
 - 37 Leavis (1968), vol. 2, p.1. .
 - 38 Gilbert and Gubar (1974, 2000), p. 114.
 - 39 Ibid., p.117.
 - 40 Introduction, *Juvenilia*, p. lv.
 - 41 Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 28; Drabble, Foreword, Grey (1989), pp. xiii, xiv.
 - 42 Doody, 'Jane Austen, That Disconcerting "Child"', in edd. Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), p. 103; Doody, 'The Short Fiction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, eds. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p. 98; Richard Jenkins, *A Fine Brush on Ivory: An Appreciation of Jane Austen* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), p. 31.
 - 43 See Alexander and McMaster, note 42.
 - 44 Virginia Woolf, 'Jane Austen at Sixty', *Nation & Athenaeum*, 15 December 1923, reprinted in *Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1988), vol. 2, p. 275; Emily Auerbach, 'The Geese vs. the "Niminy Piminy Spinster": Virginia Woolf Defends Jane Austen', *Persuasions On-Line* (Winter 2008), vol. 1, no. 1.
 - 45 Katharine Metcalfe's edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, planned with Chapman and published by the Clarendon Press in 1912, was the prototype of Chapman's Oxford Edition of the novels, although her contribution is nowhere acknowledged and her name is not mentioned (see Brian Southam, *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage Volume 2 1870-1940* (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 79-80, 148-149 and Sutherland (2005), pp. 36-44.

‘Poor Farmer Andrews!’

Jane Hurst

On Sunday 26 November 1815, Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra: ‘Poor Farmer Andrews! I am sorry for him, & sincerely wish his recovery.’¹

‘Poor Farmer Andrews’ was a member of a family who came from the neighbouring village of Medstead and who had occupied New Park Farm (also called Chawton Lower Park Farm or Chawton Park Farm) since the 1750s. At that time, the farm was about 100 years old, having been made out of the lower part of the larger of two medieval Chawton Parks which belonged to the Knight family. The first Farmer Andrews of Chawton was John who had married Sarah Wake in Medstead in 1739.



Chawton Park Farm

In 1774, about six months before he died, John Andrews the elder of Chawton Park made his will.² He left his eldest son, another John, ‘the lease of the farm and lands called Chawton Lower Park rented by me of Thomas Knight Esq., for the term of unexpired years’, as well as other land. John’s brothers, Richard and William, were to inherit estates in Medstead and brother James had property in Bighton and £100 with brother Andrew getting land in Privett and £100. Brother Edward had already been set up in trade in Basingstoke; Sarah, the widow, was to have an estate in Farringdon and daughter Sarah was provided for with property



*Medstead Church, where most of the Andrews family were baptised,
married and buried*

in Alton. This Farmer Andrews (John I) had done very well for himself and his family: Medstead parish registers show that he was buried there, having been 'brought from Chawton'.

John Andrews II had married Jane, another member of the large Andrews family, in 1763 in nearby Bentworth. John and Jane's eldest son, John III, was baptised there in that December while their other children were baptised in the Andrews' family parish of Medstead. In 1808, when he was aged about 68, the second John Andrews drew up his will.³ Like his father, he had acquired a large number of properties as well as the lease of Chawton Park Farm,⁴ which is where he lived. Again the lease went to an eldest son called John (John III) and there was £100 for each of the 10 grandchildren. A codicil to the will, dated just a few months after Jane Austen arrived in Chawton, shows that John had moved into Alton and left his eldest son in charge at the farm.

John Andrews III had married in 1786 but, after the birth of two daughters, his young wife died. A year later, in 1796, John married again and a third daughter was born. About the time they took over Chawton Park Farm, the Andrews family had some visitors, as Fanny Austen/Knight, daughter of Jane's brother Edward, wrote in her diary⁵ for Tuesday 22 October 1809: 'Aunts C. & J. Charles & I walked to New Park Farm.'⁶ Fanny was aged about 16 and the Andrews girls were Elizabeth aged 18 and Ann aged 8. The eldest daughter, 21-year old Sarah Andrews, had already married and left home. The walk to Chawton Park Farm would not have been the only time that the Austens would have met Farmer Andrews and his

family as John took an active part in village affairs, holding the post of Chawton's Church Warden and Overseer of the Poor.

Jane Austen mentioned a Mrs Andrews at the end of a letter to Cassandra dated 14 June 1814 when she wrote: 'I saw Mrs Andrews yesterday. Mrs Browning had seen her before. She is very glad to send an Elizabeth.'⁷ If this was a reference to Mary, wife of Jane's 'Farmer Andrews' (John III), then the Elizabeth could have been her step-daughter. There was another related Andrews family in the village: Andrew Andrews, youngest son of the first Farmer Andrews of Chawton Park Farm, had married Honor Baigen in 1779 and Honor's sister, Ann Baigen, had married Thomas Browning in 1778. Honor died in 1811 but she had a daughter Elizabeth in 1788 who was the fourth of her nine children. As the youngest child, Andrew was aged only 11 when his mother died, at which time the children's aunt Ann Browning and their relation Mary Andrews of Chawton Park Farm could well have helped look after the family. Honor and Ann Baigen's brother William lived at the family farmhouse which adjoined the Austen garden.⁸ There is now a modern building between them.

On 26 November 1815, John Andrews III must have been ill as that was when Jane wrote her comment about 'Poor Farmer Andrews!' Aged 54, he was to survive another year, being buried in Medstead on 6 November 1816 by the Revd George Coulthard.

The estate accounts of Jane's brother Edward⁹ were kept by the Trimmers, the attorneys of Alton, and show that the tenancy of Chawton Park Farm was kept on by John Andrews's representatives for another year while his estate was settled. As there was no son to carry on the business, the buildings were repaired, with the work being done by William Gold (a mason), James Clinker (the blacksmith who was next door to the Austens), and William Jones of Farringdon (a carpenter). Farmer Andrews's widow, Mary, was paid £6 for straw and £18 for sanfoin 'left on Chawton Park New Farm' and the farm was leased to James Windibank. Mary moved to Medstead, where she died in 1820, aged 61.

Notes

1 Deirdre Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford, 1995), p. 301.

2 HRO 1774 B02.

3 HRO 1812 B02.

4 HRO Chawton Land Tax, Q22/1/1/8.

5 Maidstone RO U951 F24/1-69.

6 A walk including a detour to include Chawton Park Farm is given in *Jane Austen and Chawton*, Jane Hurst (2009).

7 *Letters*, p. 264.

8 Jane Hurst, 'Baigens, Chawton', *Hampshire Field Club Newslette* 44 (Autumn 2005).

9 HRO 79M78/B211.

Elinor, Marianne and Dorothy L. Sayers

Carol Hartley

Anyone asked to name two English women novelists of the past as unlike one another as possible, in both their personality and their work, might find it hard to name a more dissimilar pair than Jane Austen and Dorothy L. Sayers. However, the later novelist knew and admired the work of the earlier one, and made references to her in two perhaps rather unexpected contexts: when working on her great translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and – in more light-hearted vein – in connection with her post-war household.

Sayers's first reference to Jane Austen appears to be in a letter to her parents, undated, but possibly written in the spring of 1918 when she was nearly twenty-five.¹ Telling her father that she was glad he liked Jane Austen, she added 'she's one of the people about whom there is no question at all.'²

Sayers's published letters have three references to Jane Austen in connection with her work on Dante – her consuming passion in the last fourteen years of her life prior to her death in 1957. In 1946, in a letter to the Revd Eric Thornton (Chief Organising Secretary of the S.P.C.K.), she described Virgil and Dante in *The Divine Comedy* as 'the most gracious, the most delicate-humorous and the most intimately drawn pair of companions who ever stepped through a work of fiction outside the novels of Jane Austen. All their charm is in a look, a gesture, a turn of the sentence'³ – which could be a description of some of the characters and relationships in the novels.

In November 1949 just after the publication of the first part of the work, her translation of the *Inferno*, Sayers wrote to her friend the Italian scholar Barbara Reynolds saying that she had just thought, too late, of the quotation which should have appeared on the title-page – the words of Mr Bennet when told of Elizabeth's engagement to Darcy: "We all know him to be a proud, unpleasant sort of man; but this would be nothing if you really liked him." "I do, I do like him", she replied, with tears in her eyes; "I love him. Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable." Sayers felt that this would have been 'such fun for the critics and the academics, and all the dreary people who call Dante "grim".' At the end of the letter she asserted that whatever Mr Bennet might say, she maintained with tears in her eyes that she loved Dante, and that he was perfectly amiable.⁴

She made a further comparison in her letter of 25 July 1952 to Professor Cesare Foligno (a former Professor of Italian at Oxford University), stating that Dante's sense of humour was so far from being English 'that most English critics say roundly that he has none. That is why the only English writer I could find to compare him to was Jane Austen, who is by no means typical of "English" humour, being malicious, witty and dry.'⁵

Sayers's other allusions to individual characters created by Jane Austen also

occur in the late 1940s, but in a domestic context, when she and her husband 'Mac' Fleming had been living at Witham in Essex for some seventeen years. Writing to C.S. Lewis on 2 June 1947, she told him that 'looking forward to the confidently-expected food-crisis', she had purchased two hens, and since they displayed the habits of Sense and Sensibility she had named them Elinor and Marianne. 'Elinor is a round, comfortable, motherly-looking little body, who lays one steady, regular, undistinguished egg per day ... Marianne is leggier, timid, and liable to hysterics. Sometimes she lays a shell-less egg, sometimes a double yolk, sometimes no egg at all.' On days when she laid no egg she would sit in the nest 'for the usual time, and seems to imagine that nothing more is required', the gardener observing 'She just *thinks* she's laid an egg'; but the eggs she did lay were larger than those Elinor produced. 'But you cannot wish to listen to this cackle ...'.⁶

Writing to her friend Norah Lambourne on 9 September that year, Sayers said that nothing much was happening, 'except the sudden and mysterious death of poor Elinor under distressing circumstances.' She did not say what these circumstances were, but did mention that two new hens were coming the following week. In a further letter to Norah later in the month, she said that the new pullets had arrived – 'Jane and Elizabeth. Marianne made a shocking fuss – marching up to the back door and screaming at Mac (who happened to be there) and using all the language she knew.' This is accompanied by a splendid sketch of the 'shocking fuss', showing Marianne, long neck and long legs fully extended, short wings fluffed out, eyes staring and beak wide open, presumably in order to scream. However, things calmed down quickly, and all was well 'except that poor Elizabeth has somehow or other lost her tail, which makes her look a bit comic.'⁷

In a letter to her son dated 31 March 1948, Sayers mentioned that the three hens were sitting about in the wet, 'refusing to lay a single egg among them'. Not long afterwards a pig was added to the household menagerie, 'an embarrassingly affectionate creature' who turned out to be a voracious eater: in a postscript to her letter of 22 May, Sayers told her son that her days 'seem to be a mere progress from one meal to the other: feed the pig, feed the hens, feed the cat, feed ourselves, wash up, feed the pig, feed the hens ... like a recurring decimal.'⁸ (A complaint which countless harassed housewives down the centuries would feelingly endorse!) At the end of July, we learn that 'the pig nearly killed my favourite hen the other day, and the poor bird will be lame for life', but she did not say if it was Jane, Elizabeth or Marianne who had been injured. In October the pig went the way of all pigs, but by that time there were five hens, of whom we hear no more.⁹

It seems highly unlikely that the Austen ladies would have warmed to Dorothy L. Sayers, an extremely outspoken and pugnacious woman whose son, moreover, was illegitimate. However, there were two subjects on which they would have been in agreement.

The first was their patriotism. Sayers's strong feelings about her country and its place in history are shown in two letters in particular – one dated 23 June 1940

to her son, the other dated 12 May 1944 to W.L. Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister of Canada. In the earlier letter, she told her son (then aged sixteen) to look at the history he used to find so difficult: 'England is back now in the centre stream of her tradition – she is where she was in 1588 and in 1815. Spain held all Europe, France held all Europe, they broke themselves upon England; we have got to see that the same thing happens to Germany.'¹⁰ In the letter to Mackenzie King she spoke very movingly of this country, part of the letter pointing out that 'Small as we are, we are the keepers of the gate ... For nearly nine hundred years we have kept the gate of Europe open ... But the gate is getting too heavy for us to hold alone; this time it almost slipped from our hands before help could come. Yet, when we saw the enemy in the Channel Ports, we felt a great lifting of heart ... We knew again who we were, and what we were for.' She referred to arguments about wealth and prosperity – these were important, 'but chiefly as a means to one end – the keeping of the gate ... we are the keepers of the gate, and nobody else can keep it but the island that is set in the gate.'¹¹ One feels that the Austens – with two serving sailors in the forces combatting the threat from Napoleon – would have heartily applauded all this.



Dorothy L. Sayers

The other point of contact between Sayers and the Austen ladies is the fact that, like them, she experienced the difficulties caused by war, and the need for thrifty domestic planning. They would certainly have approved her careful management of her household. In this – and also in the humour which she brought to the problems of daily life – she had much in common with Jane Austen and her family.

Notes

- 1 I am most grateful to David Higham Associates Ltd. for their permission to quote from the letters of Dorothy L. Sayers.
These letters are fascinating, written to all sorts of correspondents from the Archbishop of Canterbury downwards, and dealing with all sorts of subjects, from extremely important Christian ethical and theological matters to the engaging of a new housemaid and the mysterious non-appearance of some meat which had been ordered. Although she died half a century ago, many of the letters are – sadly – astonishingly relevant to 2010, discussing what would now be called the culture of violence and the ‘dumbing down’ of scholarship and education, the deterioration of behaviour, the greed and mismanagement of politicians, and the loss of standards of conduct.
- 2 *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers. 1899-1936: The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Chosen and edited by Barbara Reynolds (St Martin’s Press, New York, 1996), p. 136.
- 3 *Ibid*, p. 237.
- 4 *Ibid*, pp. 469-71.
- 5 *Ibid*, vol. 4, 1951-1957: *In the Midst of Life* (The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2000), p. 60. This letter is so long that in print it runs from p. 56 to p. 62.
- 6 *Ibid*, vol. 3, 1944-1950: *A Noble Daring* (The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1998), p. 305.
- 7 *Ibid*, pp. 325, 326-8.
- 8 *Ibid*, pp. 361, 373.
- 9 *Ibid*, pp. 389, 399, 407.
- 10 *Ibid*, vol. 2, 1937-1943: *From novelist to playwright* (The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997), p. 168.
- 11 *Ibid*, vol. 3 (as note 6 above), pp. 9-11.

Through the eyes of a contemporary: Jane Austen's novels as seen by Henry Crabb Robinson

Hilary Newman



Henry Crabb Robinson

Firstly, who was Henry Crabb Robinson and why are his comments relevant? Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867) was a barrister in the early part of the nineteenth century. His importance for literary scholars, however, lies in the fact that from 1811 onwards he kept a diary. In this he recorded his observations on writers of his day and commented on their works. Crabb Robinson was born in the same year as Jane Austen, but as she died in early middle age in 1817, and he lived into his nineties, the diarist outlived her by fifty years. His observations on Jane Austen's writings are worth examining seriously because he was intelligent and perceptive and most importantly he trusted his own judgement, as he made clear in his diary: 'But I know no resource against the perplexity arising from the diversities of opinion in those I look up to, but in determination to disregard all opinions and trust to my own unstudied suggestions and natural feelings.'¹ Crabb Robinson kept up with the writers of his day, including Jane Austen. This brief article will trace his comments on Jane Austen's six novels.

Henry Crabb Robinson's first reference to Jane Austen is found in a diary entry for 11 January 1819 in which he recorded that he was amusing himself with *Pride and Prejudice*. The next day he sat up reading until two in the morning, as he had done the night before, to finish *Pride and Prejudice*, which he considered as 'one of the most excellent of the works of our female novelists.' He praised its characters and 'the perfectly colloquial style of the dialogue'; Mrs Bennet he thought 'capitally drawn' and Mr Collins 'a masterly sketch'. He approved of the contrast between the two eldest Bennet sisters, 'the gentle and candid Jane, and the lively but prejudiced Elizabeth' and thought them 'both good portraits'. The developing relationship between Darcy and Jane 'who at first hate each other, is executed with skill and effect'. In a letter to 'Mrs W.P.', written on 1 February

1819, Crabb Robinson returned to the subject of *Pride and Prejudice*, which he recommended his correspondent to read. He praised it again in the same terms as we have already noted. He ended by saying that subsequently he had read 'a still better book' – Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*. Twenty years later, in July 1839, he again recorded devoting time to re-reading *Pride and Prejudice*, which he had borrowed from the library.

In 1822, Crabb Robinson was reading *Emma*, 'a novel evincing great good sense, and an acute observation of human life', but which he surprisingly concluded 'is not interesting'. He thought Harriet 'the best conceived character' but could not care much for a woman who fell in love with three different men in a year! He recognised that Emma was the heroine but he regarded her as 'little more than a clever woman who does foolish things – makes mistakes for others, and is at last caught unawares herself.' He thought the reader was presented with too many 'fools': Mr Woodhouse, Miss Bates and the Eltons. Later in life, however, Crabb Robinson revised his view of *Emma*: in October 1839 he recorded 'reading Miss Austen's admirable *Emma*' (notice the admiring adjective, which represents quite a turnaround in his opinion).

Indeed during the year 1839 he seems generally to have returned to a perusal of Jane Austen's novels. In July he was reading *Sense and Sensibility*, which he felt no inclination to finish (for him 'a rare occurrence in novel-reading'). When re-reading it in September 1839 he found 'The last volume greatly improves on the first'. But even so he still thinks it 'one of the poorest of Miss Austen's novels – that is, inferior to *Mansfield Park* and *Pride and Prejudice*, which is all I have read'. There are no other comments on *Mansfield Park* in his diary, which is disappointing.

Three years later, in September 1842, we find Crabb Robinson increasing his range of reading among Jane Austen's novels: he was now reading *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. He concluded: 'These two novels have sadly reduced my estimation of Miss Austen. They are little more than galleries of disagreeables and the would-be heroes and heroines are scarcely out of the class of insignificants.' If the modern reader is surprised by Crabb Robinson's verdict on the earliest and latest of Jane Austen's six novels, he or she is perhaps reassured to discover that the diarist himself felt unsure of his own powers to estimate their worth, writing, 'Yet I ought to be suspicious perhaps of my own declining judgement'.

That he nevertheless considered Jane Austen as a writer of major importance is revealed in a diary entry for 7 February 1843, when he recorded reading Susan Ferrier's *The Inheritance*. This now little known novel, Crabb Robinson writes, was 'hardly equal to Miss Austen ... or even Miss Edgeworth'. This comment apparently puts Jane Austen at the top of the pyramid of these three writers, again coinciding with modern judgements.

Crabb Robinson finally returned to Jane Austen late in life, on 23 April 1860, in connection with his reading of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*. He evidently put Jane Austen and George Eliot on a par, as he compared their methods of character drawing when he described Mrs Tulliver's three sisters as 'exquisitely

drawn characters, true to nature like Miss Austen – natural figures’.

In conclusion, Henry Crabb Robinson returned to the novels of Jane Austen several times during his long life, and his verdicts on her seem to grow gradually more positive. Many of his judgements concur with those of modern readers; while those that radically differ are provocative enough to send the reader back to another reading of the novels themselves.

Note

- 1 *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers*, ed. Edith J. Morley (London, 1938), p. 103. All references are to this edition.

A weather eye on Captain Wentworth

T. A. B. Corley

Captain Frederick Wentworth makes less of an impact on the reader of Jane Austen’s novels than do most of her leading men. Fitzwilliam Darcy was more glamorous, George Knightley more habitually right-minded (except about Frank Churchill), and Henry Tilney more teasingly witty. Besides, his name is only half right. ‘Wentworth’ illustrates the author’s penchant for aristocratic names,¹ and provides Sir Walter Elliot with an opportunity to make a characteristically snobbish put-down about lacking a connection with the Strafford peerage.² As to ‘Frederick’, a later generation might have been put in mind of the wimpish Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance*;³ at any rate, no one would have twice addressed the Captain as Fred.

What irretrievably blurs our impression of Wentworth’s personality is the way in which *Persuasion* is structured. Apart from two brief passages, the whole of the novel is told from Anne Elliot’s viewpoint and her reactions to events round her. If Marilyn Butler’s statement that Wentworth is the protagonist but not the central character of the book does not quite touch the spot,⁴ Reginald Farrer provides a more penetrating assessment:

So completely, in fact, do Anne and her feelings consume the book that the object of them becomes negligible. Wentworth, delightful jolly fellow that he is ..., quite fades out of our interest, and almost out of our sight.⁵

To be sure, Wentworth displays too much of an – admittedly controllable – temper to be called jolly. The sole example in the novel of his dry wit, about the ‘arrangement of Providence’ impeding a family introduction of the then out-of-favour Mr. Elliot, sprang from his exasperation with the nonsensical Mary Musgrove, rather than to raise a laugh. Yet he remains, as Brimley Johnson pointed out, ‘the most high-spirited of all her [Jane Austen’s] heroes; gayer and younger in act and word than Darcy, Knightley, Edmund, Edward, or even Henry Tilney’, all of whom were landowners or clergyman without martial backgrounds.⁶

Jane Austen’s portrayal of Wentworth was derived from close observation of

her two naval officer brothers, Frank and Charles, relishing their lengthy yarns of adventures at sea while they were on shore leave, and poring endlessly over their family letters sent from sea.⁷ Both were far more high-spirited than either James Austen the ailing cleric or Edward Knight the stodgy landowner (as for the irrepressible Henry, he had after all been on active service in the army).

Wentworth therefore deserves deeper scrutiny than he has received of late, if only because Anne Elliot possesses such a faultless nature, being highly sensitive but resolute where needed, that readers need to be convinced that he is in all respects worthy of her enduring affection for him. Here three sides of his character are explored. The first, bizarre, question, 'Did he swear?' furnishes a useful point of entry into the topic as a whole. Then an investigation into his attitude to women is a prelude to discussing the most unexpected episode in the novel, and indeed in the whole canon of her works. A brief study of the cancelled Chapter X of Volume II is followed by a concluding section.

Did Wentworth swear?

Roger Gard was doubtless the first to pose this egregious question, by stating: 'I have heard it objected – by a naval man – that these sailors [Wentworth and his comrades] do not swear enough to be real naval men'.⁸ Gard cited in evidence 'the rather tiresome half-hearted *verismo* [realism] of Captain Mirvan in [Fanny Burney's] *Evelina* or the more authentic antiquated violence of naval manners in Smollett', clearly recalling Commodore Trunnion in *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*.⁹ Although Jane Austen could never have heard swearing at home, she very effectively introduced bad language into *Mansfield Park*, to portray Lieutenant Price, Fanny's disreputable Royal Marine father who 'swore and ... drank' (such as 'By G—') and 'was dirty and gross'.¹⁰

Gard asserted that Jane Austen's exclusion of any swearing from the novel touched on 'the real axis of *Persuasion*', that the novel is not primarily 'a piece of realistic drawing' but 'a term [a kind of theatrical backcloth] in a love story'.¹¹ Most readers would dismiss that backdrop theory, because Wentworth clearly owed much to the vibrant characters of the two sailor brothers. Frank never forgot his father's 930-word letter of advice handed over before he went off to sea at the age of 14. Among the instructions were how to behave in the 'little world' of shipboard life he would be entering: to show 'affability, good humour and compliance' to orders. He should practise sobriety, to safeguard his health, morals and fortune, as well as prudence, to avoid wasting time as well as money.¹²

Except in demonstrating affability and good humour, Frank followed that advice throughout a lengthy naval career, perhaps too faithfully in allowing his Evangelical principles to impose on those under him over-rigorous discipline and retribution against wrongdoing. As captain, the number of his floggings was so excessive that a critical report on him went to the Admiralty. By contrast, Charles maintained a life-long equable temper and affectionate disposition that was widely admired. Like his brother, he needed above all to maintain discipline among ships' companies made up of pressed men liable to insubordination and drunkenness. Yet he inflicted flogging on no more than 23 men in the 1826-7 period, and then only in

the last resort, preferring to lecture offenders and give them final warnings.¹³

Jane Austen, according to her nephew's *Memoir* of 1870, in her novels 'did not copy individuals, but she invested her own creations with individuality of character'.¹⁴ When replying to an American correspondent in 1852, Frank could not say whether Wentworth contained anything of himself, but his own skill as a handyman, for example in fashioning small objects in wood, was reflected in the practically-minded Captain Harville. Wentworth seems to have had some traits of both brothers, being undoubtedly nearer to Charles. On the subject of swearing, Frank is known to have maintained his stringent discipline 'without ever uttering an oath or permitting one in his presence'. Charles, too, commended his chaplains for their sermons against swearing, profanity or drunkenness.¹⁵ Admiral Croft would never have ventured to tell Anne that the Captain's letter about Louisa's and Benwick's engagement did not contain 'an oath or murmur' if he knew that Wentworth was prone to swearing.

What was Wentworth like?

It seems that Wentworth's background was similar to that of the Austens. Because his brother was ordained and his sister married a future admiral, he could have belonged to a far from affluent clerical or naval family, lacking worthwhile connections in either professional circle. As an elder sister, the future Mrs Croft – who did not marry until 1799 – was almost certainly a good influence on him before he departed from home. The historian G.M. Trevelyan saw such men from modest backgrounds, for instance Wentworth and William Price in *Mansfield Park*, as combining what was best in the "tarpaulin's" [practical seagoing] experience and training with the manner and thought of an educated man'.¹⁶ However, when both Wentworth parents died, some time before 1806, they left little or nothing to their children; thus Frederick had no inherited fortune and 'no hope of attaining influence'. That handicap made marriage at 23, especially to a baronet's daughter, a distinctly chancy business.

Clive Caplan's article of 2007 on 'Naval Aspects of *Persuasion*' helpfully links the successive phases of Wentworth's career, as outlined in the novel, with concurrent events in the Royal Navy.¹⁷ According to Caplan, he probably went to sea at the same age as William Price, when 12 or 13, as a 'captain's servant'. He seems to have been seaborne for most of the intervening period until the six months he spent ashore and met Anne Elliot in 1806. Two years later, he was in England before taking up command of the *Laconia*, but failed to contact Anne, being still bitter at her having broken off their engagement. His active service in that warship was continuous until it was paid off a few months after the Peace of Paris in May 1814.

Until recently, few commentators had speculated that there was something dodgy in Wentworth's character. Then in 2004 Maggie Lane highlighted 'some aspects of his behaviour which seem to me morally questionable, yet are not noticed by either the narrator or Anne'.¹⁸ She cites, for instance, his heartless act of pushing off from the injured Louisa's side two weeks after the fall at Lyme. In truth, he had stayed behind until she was clearly on the mend, but was acutely aware that if he

were around any longer, his friends would expect him to announce an engagement he did not want. He could well have written to her often by what Jane Fairfax called – for its ‘regularity and dispatch’ – that ‘wonderful establishment’, the Post Office.¹⁹ Captain Benwick, by contrast, lodging nearby proved to be useful not only for local errands but also for matrimonially taking over Louisa.

Maggie Lane also raised a so-called ‘minor quibble’, but in fact a far graver accusation. On the strength of Jane Austen’s throwaway remark that Wentworth as a young officer, flush with prize money, had been ‘spending freely, what had come freely’, she enquired, ‘Does Captain Wentworth drink, or womanise, or gamble? We hope none of these things.’²⁰ Yet hope is no substitute for a careful scrutiny of the context. If the remaining evidence in the novel makes clear that he was not a voluptuary, he could well have allowed his generosity towards comrades, or others with a hard-luck story, to make him a soft touch.

Michael Tatham in 2006 followed up Maggie Lane’s musings by a broader reflection: ‘how far should we think of Jane Austen’s more mature lovers [those who knew something of the world] as men with sexual experience?’ Significantly, in a lengthy article Tatham devoted only a single paragraph to the ‘straight-forward’ example of Wentworth, who he assumed would have been eager for ‘the pleasures and consolations of female companionship’, while being careful to avoid any serious commitments. ‘One cannot imagine’, he opined, ‘that the man who had loved Anne Elliot so passionately would have sat twiddling his thumbs’.²¹ Less coyly, Lilian Rowland-Brown – alias Rowland Grey – as early as 1917, in an article on ‘The Navy, the Army and Jane Austen’, wrote, ‘He who would flirt hard with Louisa Musgrove had surely kept his hand in [where, is not clear] during the years of separation, after poor Anne had yielded to persuasion’.²² Tatham, also in 2006, let his imagination run riot over Wentworth’s supposed goings-on after Anne had broken the engagement. He posited that the Captain ‘would have been a very cold-hearted or peculiar fellow’ not to go hunting for sex.²³ Yet the personally warm Frank Austen did not marry until the age of 32, and went on to father eleven children, while Charles married at 28 and was the parent of eight children.

Such conjectures about Wentworth’s pursuit of wine, women and high stakes can be tested against a teasing remark he made to his extremely perceptive sister, that he ‘had no society among women to make him nice’, in other words refined and cultured: one that his ‘bright, proud eye’ contradicted, and she did not. As to a cultivated mind, he was clearly no reader, confining himself to the *Navy List*, local volumes of the *Admiralty Pilot* series, and the *Naval Regulations and Instructions*, forerunners of the twentieth-century *Admiralty Fleet Orders*. His conduct towards women had clearly been refined enough for Anne and him, after an increasingly close friendship, in 1806 to fall ‘rapidly and deeply in love’, finding both happiness and perfection in each other. The abrupt termination, by her jilting him, of that ‘exquisite felicity’ amply explains his resentment, which persisted over eight years. He did not shrug and conclude that there were plenty of other fish in the sea, but later claimed to have been ‘constant’ to her, in the sense that ‘he had meant to forget her, and believed it to be done’.

Significantly, that savage blow to his happiness and self-esteem did not make

him misanthropic, as two cases are recorded of his extraordinary generosity to close mates. First of all, he conveyed Captain Harville's family from Portsmouth to Plymouth, against strongly held 'no women on board' principles, and then he travelled night and day in the opposite direction to inform Benwick in person that his fiancée had died during his voyage home. According to Elizabeth Jenkins, undoubtedly drawing on personal knowledge:

People with relations in the Royal Navy plume themselves a little on the idea that they can realize better than others the verisimilitude of this description [about breaking the news to Benwick] of Captain Wentworth's behaviour. The sympathy of men on active service for each other has been always celebrated; but the bond uniting men at sea together is often something unique in human experience.²⁴

Wentworth's bonding with comrades, which so enchanted Anne Elliot, remained as strong in 1814 when, at last enjoying leisure and a fortune, he prepared to settle down and marry. However, his awareness that he would be a 'lost man' to 'a little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy' in no time seemed to be confirmed when he developed 'a little fever of admiration' for Louisa Musgrove: one which rapidly tipped over into something more serious. Like many men with scant knowledge of women, he was really in love with her 'youth, determination and enthusiasm',²⁵ rather than with the whole woman: he could only later concede that she was 'not deficient in understanding'. His judgments on her good points became even cooler as the novel wears on, from 'eager and resolute' to 'she would not have been obstinate if I had not been weak', and most damning of all, she was mentally inferior to Benwick, a 'clever man, a reading man'.

His general attitude to the female sex can be seen in his refusal to carry women in his ship, a practice which he condemned as 'an evil in itself'. Yet he had made an exception for Mrs Harville. At that time, the Admiralty never issued any instructions on the subject, but left the matter to individual commanding officers or their admirals.²⁶ Not all wives found life on board so tolerable as Mrs Croft did. Brian Southam, in *Jane Austen and the Navy*, cites the case of Betsy Wynne, wife of Captain Thomas Fremantle, who during a 7½ months' voyage endured 'misery' and 'inconveniences', from what Southam describes as 'the grim realities of naval life, its cruelty, bloodshed and horror'.²⁷ Normally, Wentworth had no wish to take the risk of women being subjected to such ordeals, unlikely as they were between ports in the English Channel. He was capable of running a warship humanely but strictly, encouraging recreation for ratings to let off steam, getting rid of undesirables, and replacing them with sailors known to work hard in the expectation of the prize money he had the knack of winning.

Wentworth's breakdown on the Cobb at Lyme

The distinguished scholar Sir Herbert Read, when recounting the Cobb episode, found distasteful its 'atmosphere of a marionette's [*sic*] opera'.

While accepting its content to be 'right enough', he criticised what he saw as Jane Austen's 'ludicrous' over-genteel-cum-bathetic style of presentation.²⁸ The subtlety with which she portrayed her account of events seems to have passed him by.

Anne had for many years of her life, and quite recently following the others' departure from Kellynch to Bath, conscientiously performed the social obligations, especially round the neighbourhood, heaped on her by family members. Those voluntary acts had undoubtedly been character-forming. Wentworth, shortly after their reconciliation, may have over-praised her combination of 'fortitude and gentleness', but Jane Austen made a point of emphasising her 'quickness of perception,' or a 'nicety in the discernment of character ... which no experience in others can equal', and which was certainly absent in Lady Russell. Having observed other people's mistakes and misjudgments, Anne had instinctively learnt how to cope should things go wrong.

Wentworth, by contrast, had lived almost without a break in a masculine environment since the age of about 12, so that his few personal contacts with females would have been on occasions when they were turned out as what his sister scornfully called 'fine ladies', well groomed, and not with tousled hair and drawn faces, being violently sick over the side. Had a terrified midshipman fallen in his sight from the rigging, he would instantly have given orders for him to be taken below to the ship's doctor. Yet now at the Cobb he found himself having inadvertently killed or gravely injured a young woman who – as it happened – was widely expected to become his bride. At that moment he thought not of Louisa, but about the accident's likely impact on her parents. Jane Austen brilliantly summed up Wentworth's and Anne's immediate reactions, in two brief sentences:

'Oh God! Her father and mother!'

'A surgeon!' said Anne.

Having picked up the unconscious Louisa, Wentworth then pleaded, 'Is there no one to help me?' – and this from a man lately in command of a fighting ship, exercising powers of life and death over everyone on board. He then leant against a wall, before looking for instructions from Anne whom he had not fully forgiven. Yet once that dramatic incident had revealed to him previously unrealised qualities in her, give or take a few misunderstandings over Mr Elliot Jane Austen's clever twist of Louisa's engagement to Benwick ensured a happy ending.

Wentworth and the two endings to *Persuasion*

In the manuscript Chapter X of the novel's Volume II, Jane Austen shows Wentworth once again at a loss in a situation involving a young woman.²⁹ At the Cobb in Lyme, he had taken several minutes to regain self-control after Louisa's fall. At the scene in Bath, he had to be almost physically propelled into the room in order to speak to Anne there, by the Admiral, who was certain that she was shortly to marry Mr Elliot. The pretext for Wentworth's addressing her was to ask if the Crofts should surrender their lease of Kellynch, in order to allow the prospective Elliot newlyweds to take over. Once in the room, Wentworth rambled on for a page and a half, 'in a voice of effort and constraint'; again, as at Lyme, it was Anne who took charge, briefly and with 'fortitude' scotching the rumour. The reconciliation scene that followed was too much for her sensibilities, leading to a sleepless night, and next day to a headache and fatigue.

Jane Austen completed that draft on 18 July 1816, the 'year without a summer',

struggling to write in a rain-sodden atmosphere that never allowed the house's walls – there being no damp course – to dry out,³⁰ four months after her brother Henry's bank failure had inflicted painful financial losses on virtually the whole family. Unexpectedly, according to London weather records, the earlier continuous rainfall then gave way to a sunny spell from 26 July to 4 August; the barometer rose sharply, while midday temperatures recorded almost 20 degrees Celsius. In Reading, only 23 miles north of Chawton, 'two or three days' of dry weather were likewise noted before 5 August. In her nephew's memorable words, 'One night she retired to rest in very low spirits.... The next morning she awoke to more cheerful views and brighter inspiration: the sense of power revived, and imagination resumed its course.'³¹ Responsive as always to weather changes, by 6 August she had composed a fresh version, which contained one of the most moving episodes in English fiction.

Events at the White Hart Inn, one Saturday in February or March 1815, are once again shown from Anne's viewpoint, but the defining moment was when faint heart wooed fair lady with a hastily scrawled letter to her. She replied not in writing but – as so often in Jane Austen – through her eyes, by catching up with him outside the inn and meeting his look 'not repulsively'. The remainder of the day effortlessly glided past, even allowing Anne a leisurely period of 'meditation' in her room, before she appeared, 'glowing and lovely in sensibility and happiness' at the evening party. Unlike in the earlier draft, that night she must have retired to bed with soothing dreams.

Conclusion

A fairly recent numerical technique has helped to throw new light on a significant aspect of the interaction between Wentworth and Anne. John F. Burrows, in his *Computation into Criticism: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels and an Experiment in Method* (1987), utilised a computer-generated concordance of 710,000 words in the six completed novels, to uncover by statistical means her 'astonishing exactitude of mind'.³² He traced how her leading characters in their dialogue used the thirty commonest words, such as *I, the, very* and the next thirty, including *would, know, think*. Those sixty words comprised over half of the total spoken by the characters.

Burrows found that Wentworth and Anne were remarkably compatible in their speech patterns, achieving a 95 per cent correlation in their sixty commonest words, precisely the same percentage as those for Darcy and Elizabeth and only two points below those of Mr Knightley and Emma. That outcome suggests that both Wentworth and Anne must have been trained to express themselves well when young until losing such guidance at twelve or thirteen, in the one case through departure for sea and in the latter by a mother's death. Wentworth, himself keen on having schoolmasters on board, had perhaps been fortunate in serving when young under captains – although a minority in the navy – who accepted the need for rigorous training of midshipmen.

Burrows also shows how Anne's speech moved from stiffness and formality to a far greater freedom of expression, thus confirming Mary Lascelles' statement

about the ‘bursting open, for Anne, of the prison that Sir Walter and Elizabeth have made of Kellynch – the expansion of her world’.³³ Regrettably, Burrows fails to analyse similar changes in Wentworth’s dialogue, to help chart his perceived difficulties in conversing with women. Burrows might thereby have been able to test Park Honan’s view of the Captain as naive (‘and fine and naval’), who ‘plays at love’,³⁴ although neither Louisa nor Anne were exactly his playthings.

Some of us will have met high achievers who, in struggling to the top, have clearly missed out on developing crucial aspects of their personalities, such as social poise. Lengthy voyages, in the days before refits and boiler-cleaning yielded periodic shore-leave, deprived Wentworth of female company. At least he was better off than Frederic in *The Pirates*, who had been continually at sea from the age of eight and in that time had seen only one, middle-aged, woman’s face.³⁵ Naive or not, Wentworth could at least distinguish between female faces and never be written off as a wimp. But I remain sorry never to have met Gard’s nautical friend who believed that Wentworth did not swear enough to be a real naval man, not even having uttered a single ‘big, big D—’.

Notes

The present author was a watchkeeping RNVR officer on board HMS *Ajax* from 1943 to 1945, the cruiser’s senior officers all being Royal Navy professionals. The Captain had served under Admiral Beatty, born in 1870 only five years after the death of Sir Francis Austen. Naval traditions remained powerful enough for officers still to conduct themselves, at least off duty, in ways which Jane Austen had deftly captured more than a century earlier. Thanks are due to Clive Caplan, David Gilson, Deirdre Le Faye, David Selwyn and Brian Southam for helpful comments.

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- 2 Austen, J., *Persuasion* (Chapman, R.W., ed., Oxford, 1933), p. 23.
- 3 Gilbert, W.S., *The Savoy Operas* (London, 1937), pp. 105-47.
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- 6 Brimley Johnson, R., *Jane Austen: Her Life, Her Work, Her Family and Her Critics* (London, 1930).
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- 9 Burney, F., *Evelina* (Oxford, 1982); Smollett, T., *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, Clifford, J.L., ed. (Oxford, 1964), esp. pp. 80, 360.
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The influence of Evelina on Emma

Esther Carter

Jane Austen, in a letter to Cassandra (1798) writes, '[my family] are great novel readers and not ashamed of being so'.¹ A childhood favourite, which undoubtedly influenced her, was *Evelina*, one of Fanny Burney's epistolary novels, showing society from a female perspective. Maggie Lane writes that one of Fanny Burney's main achievements was bringing 'inspiration to one of the world's greatest novelists'.² Burney, in her preface to *Evelina*, identifies the need to 'draw characters from nature ... and to mark the manners of the time' in her novels, which is also reflected in Jane Austen's books. Both authors were well received because the society was recognisable to the reader, the novelist Susan Ferrier commenting, 'the characters are all so true to life'.³ The protagonists in *Emma* and *Evelina* are developing into womanhood, and their attitudes towards courtship, friendship and reputation are strong themes. While both novels thematically consider the motif of 'a Young Lady's Entrance into the World', their experiences are different because Emma has already inherited her position in society and does not venture from Highbury, whereas Evelina initially 'knows nothing of the world', and her horizons are widened through her visit to London, much as with Catherine Morland's visit to Bath in *Northanger Abbey*.

Emma believes matchmaking 'is the greatest amusement in the world!' but this, combined with her lively imagination, results in her misguided advice to Harriet. Fanny Burney comments in her preface, 'Fiction is coloured by all the gay tints of luxurious Imagination' which may have inspired Jane Austen to write of 'that very dear part of Emma, her fancy'.

Emma is usually made aware of her misunderstandings by Mr Knightley, 'who was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them'; but occasionally she learns through other means, as in the carriage scene with Mr Elton, where he makes 'violent love to her'. This is reminiscent of Evelina's journey with Sir Clement Willoughby, during which he makes 'many ... fine speeches' which she quotes directly in her letter. Despite Evelina's 'continual attempts' to withdraw her hand, Willoughby 'grasped it between both his' and carries on regardless, later 'seizing' it again. The narrative given by Jane Austen is remarkably similar, as Emma's hand is also 'seized' and she 'tried to stop him; but vainly; he would go on.' Jane Austen uses free indirect speech to imitate Mr Elton's declaration of sentiments, as this highlights absurdities such as his being 'ready to die if she refused him'. Emma is initially characteristically optimistic: 'she felt that half this folly must be drunkenness'; but once she establishes that his feelings may be more genuine than she perhaps first considered, she is quick to assert authority, instructing him to 'command yourself enough to say no more'. Conversely, Evelina, after being paid a compliment, is 'rather softened', as she has not learnt the acceptable conduct for certain social predicaments. However, unlike Emma, who repeatedly tries matchmaking in spite

of previous failings, Evelina does appear to learn from her mistakes, writing ‘I shall take very particular care never to be again alone with him.’

Following Evelina’s eventful journey home, Willoughby ‘scolded his servant aloud’ and this is a clear insight into his character because the respect masters pay to their servants can be used as a measure of goodness. Mr Woodhouse’s kind treatment of Miss Taylor shows ‘the friendliness of his heart’, and it is also significant that Mrs Elton cannot remember the name of her servant.

Macaulay wrote that ‘Mrs Elton is the very best portrait of a vulgar woman we ever saw’.⁴ Her vulgarity is shown largely through free indirect speech, with repetition of her beloved ‘Maple Grove’, and constant references to ‘Knightley’ and her ‘cara sposo’ (as Chapman noted, in the 1816 edition each time the Italian is mentioned it is in a different form, showing her ignorance of the language). Mrs Elton is ‘extremely well satisfied with herself’ and rarely invests time in listening to other people, only wanting ‘to be talking herself’. In many respects she reflects qualities seen in Madam Duval, whose ‘ill-breeding’ is an embarrassment to Evelina. Both characters are domineering, as can be seen in Mrs Elton’s case by her attempts to organise the visit to Donwell Abbey: ‘Oh leave all that to me ... I will invite your guests’. They act as blocking characters to the plot development – fools who are easily distracted by their own vanities (as Henry James once said, ‘no “story” is possible without its fools’).⁵ Captain Mirvan, a comic character in *Evelina*, provokes Madam Duval to the point where she ‘stamped upon the floor, and, at last, spat in his face’. While Jane Austen created disagreeable, pretentious characters such as Mrs Elton, none are as aggressive or extreme as Fanny Burney’s; rather, in Macaulay’s words, ‘the vulgarity is indicated by subtle yet unmistakable touches, never by coarse language or by caricature of any kind’.

A composite scene is an effective comic device that can show the responses of various characters to a particular event. In *Evelina*, when a ‘full dressed’ monkey is ‘hauled into the room’, the ‘incessant’ screaming of Lady Louisa shows her need to be the centre of attention, while Lord Orville places himself in front of Evelina ‘as a guard’, which illustrates his gentlemanly behaviour. Mrs Selwyn ‘burst into a loud, immoderate, ungovernable fit of laughter’, but the Captain, even less restrained, ‘rolled on the floor’. Jane Austen uses the device more subtly when snow begins to settle outside Randalls. Mr Weston is so concerned that the group should not disband that ‘he wished the road might be impassable’; Isabella is prepared to walk in order to ensure the safety of her children; and John Knightley unhelpfully exaggerates the ‘snow storm’ so that Mr Woodhouse is very anxious. The ‘valetudinarian’ Mr Woodhouse’s excessive worrying is particularly evident in this passage. He is ‘silent from consternation’, and immediately looks to Emma for reassurance: ‘What is to be done, my dear Emma? – what is to be done?’ The repetition shows the panic in his voice, and it is ‘all that he could say for some time’.

Emma has a strong relationship with her father, and her natural response is to make sure she is ‘satisfied of her father’s comfort’, before meeting her own needs, even to the extent of remaining at Hartfield with Mr Knightley after their marriage.

Although Evelina does not know her real father at the beginning of the book, her open relationship with Mr Villars is a touching equivalent. Her letters are always most affectionate: 'how grateful to my heart ... is the certainty of your never failing tenderness, sympathy, and protection!' And she genuinely seeks guidance from him, in a way that is somewhat reversed in *Emma*.

It is partly Mr Knightley's considerate attitude towards Mr Woodhouse that endears the reader to him. Mr Knightley is keen for them to visit Donwell Abbey and so 'had done all in his power for Mr Woodhouse's entertainment', including preparing a room for him 'by a fire all the morning' despite its being mid-summer. He is exceedingly polite, but knows when to be honest even though 'this was not particularly agreeable to Emma herself.' Lord Orville, 'ever humane, generous, and benevolent', is another voice of reason, refusing to participate in the inhumane entertainment of his peers; and the 'rudeness' of other men, such as Lord Merton, only confirms 'the esteem of Lord Orville'. In the same way, Mr Knightley's good nature is demonstrated when he invites Harriet to dance, after Mr Elton has cruelly snubbed her. The effect of comparisons like these is depicted during the evening at the ball when Emma observes, 'He could not have appeared to greater advantage perhaps anywhere, than where he had placed himself'. While Lord Orville requests Evelina to 'think of me as if I were indeed your brother' because their friendship is deteriorating, Emma says 'we are not really so much brother and sister as to make it at all improper.' They differ because Emma and Mr Knightley have known each other for a long period of time, so the friendship is instinctive and almost like that of siblings, but for Lord Orville establishing the intimacy of a family relationship would be progress.

The final sentence of *Emma* mirrors the opening sentence by repeating the idea of 'unity', perhaps suggesting that only in matrimony can one be fully content. Evelina's final letter, written in the third person, also notes that 'she united herself for ever', which may have provided the inspiration for this conclusion.

Jane Austen has certainly incorporated many aspects of *Evelina* into *Emma*, but the style in which the narrative is delivered differs greatly. The epistolary format of *Evelina* allows a clear exploration of emotions, but Emma's feelings are portrayed more subtly through the way in which she reacts. Effective use is made of free indirect speech to paraphrase the comical twittering of Mrs Elton and Miss Bates, but the characters in *Emma* are not so exaggerated as characters like Madam Duval and Captain Mirval, and as a result the humour is more sophisticated. Jane Austen plays games with the reader by hiding plot developments in Emma's misguided thoughts but there are few clues for guessing the identity of Evelina's father. While Fanny Burney's novels may have inspired Jane Austen, and clearly influenced her work in parts, it is Jane Austen who, having seen the potential in the courtship genre, refined the approach, and introduced her own distinctive touch.

Notes

- 1 *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre le Faye (3rd edn, Oxford, 1995), p. 26.
- 2 Maggie Lane, 'Fanny Burney: Jane Austen's literary Godmother' in *Jane Austen's Regency World*, vol. 10 (2005).

- 3 William Baker, *Critical companion to Jane Austen: A literary reference to her life and work* (New York, 2007), p. 98.
- 4 Quoted by B.C. Southam in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage Volume I* (London, 1968), p. 97.
- 5 Quoted by Maaja A. Stewart in 'The Fools in Austen's *Emma*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature* vol. 41, no. 1 (June 1986), pp. 72-86.

Catherine Hubback's Memoir of Francis Austen

Deirdre Le Faye

Catherine Anne Austen (1818-77) was the fourth daughter of Captain (later Admiral) Francis Austen, and was born at Chawton Great House, which Francis was then borrowing from his brother Edward Knight while he waited in the hope of being sent back to sea again in the not too distant future, even though the long Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had finally concluded in 1815. However, as Francis had no political connections to pull strings on his behalf and arrange a commission to another ship, he remained ashore on half-pay for decades, moving from Chawton to the Isle of Wight and Gosport before finally buying Portsdown Lodge, on the hills above Portsmouth, in 1831, where he lived for the rest of his life. In 1823 Francis's wife Mary Gibson died after the birth of her eleventh child, and in 1828 he married his old friend Martha Lloyd, who had been living at Chawton Cottage ever since she joined the Austen ladies there in 1809.

On 25 August 1842 Catherine married a rising young barrister, John Hubback (1811-85), from a North Country family. Cassandra Austen, now an elderly maiden aunt, stayed at Portsdown Lodge for the wedding, and on the following day described it to her niece Anna Lefroy:

The only circumstance that one could have wished otherwise was the weather, & that continued perfectly fine till after the ceremony & till after the Bride & Bridegroom had left us; – but no sooner were they gone than such a storm of thunder, lightning & rain came on as one does not often witness. It was not incessant till five o'clock – there having been 1 or 2 interruptions – but it was not really over till after that hour, having begun at ½ past one. The Bride looked very nice in her Brussels Net Dress over white satin, a very handsome lace Cardinal & white satin bonnet with Flowers. Her two Maids wore, white muslin – clear – with Straw-colour Bonnets & lace Scarfs lined with the same colour. ... The married People returned from Church in my Carriage & had it afterwards as far as Chichester in their way to Worthing, where they propose staying till Monday, when they proceed to London for a couple of nights & from thence to the Continent. Cath: changed her Dress for something coloured & a straw Bonnet, after she came home.¹

After their foreign honeymoon the young couple lived in Torrington Square, London, and had three sons: John Henry (1844-1939), Edward Thomas (1846-1924) and Charles Austen (1848-1924). The thunderstorm at their wedding was unhappily prophetic, as Catherine's marital happiness was cut short when John Hubback suffered a mental breakdown said to be caused by overwork. Catherine took him to Malvern and Aberystwyth, in the hope rest and peace at rural spas would restore him to sanity; but in January 1850 Francis wrote to Anna Lefroy telling her that John seemed beyond recovery,² and soon afterwards Catherine had to place him in a private lunatic asylum in Alton run by Dr Charles Burnett. At some later date she moved him to another private asylum at Brislington House, near Bristol, where he died many years afterwards.³

Catherine returned to Portsdown Lodge with her three little boys, and lived for some years there under her father's roof. During her childhood, whenever Cassandra had come to visit Francis and Martha, they would talk about Jane Austen and her novels, and it seems Cassandra often read aloud to these younger nieces the fragmentary manuscript now known as *The Watsons*. These memories gave Catherine the idea of becoming a novelist herself, in order to earn some money and become a little less dependent upon her father's kindness. She therefore wrote a continuation of *The Watsons*, calling it *The Younger Sister*, which she published in 1850, in the usual three-volume format. However, Catherine had none of her aunt's wit and skill at creating credible plots and amusing characters; the first volume of her continuation is quite good, being mostly Jane Austen's text as Catherine remembered it, but the second and third volumes, where Catherine had to work out the plot for herself, grow ever further away from Jane's original and become dull and verbose, with irrelevant digressions, and very mid-Victorian in style and content. Between 1850 and 1863 Catherine succeeded in publishing another nine novels; none is remembered today, but they achieved some popularity in their time.

At some unspecified date, perhaps about 1850 as a distraction from her worries, she started to write a memoir of her father, but covered no more than three and a half pages of blue foolscap paper before abandoning the work in mid-sentence and, so far as is known, never wrote anything more on the subject. As the reader will see below, her memoir has progressed no further than Francis's birth and infancy. Her text does, however, provide the unique anecdotes of Mrs Austen having no new dress for two years after her marriage, but wearing only her red cloth riding habit, and that she attended the birth of Anna Lefroy, at Deane, in 1793. The MS is untitled, and is not a fair copy but a working text, containing interlineations, which are now given in square brackets in the transcript.

In the year 1764 took place the marriage of the reverend George Austen and Cassandra Leigh, a union which in the number of the descendants, has contributed sufficiently towards the population of the kingdom, and which in giving birth to one individual of note, has enjoyed its full share of worldly importance. The lady was the daughter of the reverend Thomas

Leigh, incumbent of Harpsden in the county of Oxford, not far from Henley on Thames, a man of good family and with a name of some celebrity. The lineal ancestor of Mr. Leigh had, it is reported, been Lord Mayor in Queen Elizabeth's time, and had carried the Queen on a pillion behind him in a public procession, for which she knighted him. The two younger brothers of this knight were raised to the peerage & from one, the youngest, have sprung (indirectly) some of the noble families whose escutcheon boasts the bar-sinister through the royal arms; for Barbara Villiers was a grand-daughter, and the only one apparently, of Leigh, Earl of Chichester.

But although antiquarians have established this fact, we ignore the connection, and are content to pass over without further notice the descendants of such a character.

To return to the incumbent of Harpsden and his daughter. The pretty village with its old manor house, its fine antique trees, and its Church with its effigy of some unknown crusader, seems just fit for a romance; but whatever romance there might have been in the love story of Miss Leigh is now lost in the distance of nearly a century ago.⁴ How she became acquainted with the 'handsome Tutor', for such was her admirer's distinction, when they met, and how they sped, is quite unknown. They did not marry till her father died, when she was accompanied by her mother to her new home.

Mr. George Austen had, with an only sister, been left an orphan, early in life; and had been brought up by his uncle, whose idea of education developed itself strongly in a determination to thwart the natural tastes of the young people as much as possible. What effect this had on the young lady, I do not know; the nephew proved by his mildness and gentleness of temper, and his steadiness of principle, that he at least was not injured by it. He was besides being a most amiable and excellent man, a most highly accomplished scholar, with exquisite taste.

The union with Miss Leigh seems indeed to have been in every way most suitable, she was quick, lively, active, matter of fact [*page 2*] with excellent sense, and a good education; together with such habits of active exertion and hardihood as are not often met with in ladies of her rank of life now. As a proof of this, when [more than 30] nearly forty years afterwards one of her daughters in law was taken ill, Mrs Austen rose from her bed in the middle of the night, and walked by the light of a lantern a mile and a half of a muddy country lane to attend her, and to usher into the world a new grandchild, an exertion which we hardly expect to find paralleled in these days.

The young couple established themselves in the village of Deane in Hampshire, Mr Austen having been presented to this living by another uncle, Francis Austen, who had always been very kind to him in boyhood, and who had purchased the next presentation to the two livings of Deane and Ashe, apparently with the view of providing for his nephew. Deane being the first vacant, to Deane he was presented, and here commenced his

married life. His sister, [like himself remarkable for personal beauty] had some time previously married Mr Hancock and gone with him to India, where she became a great friend of Warren Hastings; and through her influence and recommendation, the only son of this celebrated character on being sent to England for education was confided to the care of Mr George Austen as pupil, a year or two before he married. The family party therefore established at Deane, consisted of the clergyman and his wife, Mrs Leigh her mother, and young Hastings, whose father had not then acquired the notoriety which afterwards attended his name. This young man continued under Mr Austen's care till his death which took place at an early age.

At Deane were born 3 sons successively; but before the family had lived there many years, the rectory of Steventon became vacant; and being contiguous of Deane, and in the gift of Mr Knight, a particular friend of Mr Austen's, it was immediately given to the latter, affording an increase of income of about three hundred a year.

The Parsonage House however was in so wretched a condition that it was necessary to rebuild it, for it consisted only of a few miserable rooms of lath and plaister; but as soon as it was rendered habitable, the family removed thither, and here the rest of the children were brought into the world; namely three more sons and two daughters.

Before I dwell on these children I will give a slight sketch of the residence of a country [page 3] clergyman of those days.

The Parsonage consisted of three rooms in front on the ground floor, the best parlour, the common parlour and the kitchen, behind these were Mr Austen's study, the back-kitchen, and the stairs; above were seven bedrooms, and three attics. The rooms were low-pitched, but not otherwise bad, and compared with the usual stile of such buildings, it might be considered a very good house. Subsequent additions were occasionally made, but not to any great extent.

The hand of improvement has swept away the whole now; another class of clergymen require another style of dwelling, and modern pilgrims to the birth-place of Jane Austen would look in vain for the roof which sheltered her [in] early years.

Neither were the usual manners and habits of the family much more nearly conformable to present customs than the dwelling. Mr Austen took pupils to educate with his own sons, and Mrs Austen in superintending her household, and the parish, taking care of a numerous and increasing family, and getting through eight confinements had plenty to do without mixing much in society.

That she had no taste for expensive show or finery may be inferred from the fact being on record that for two years she actually never had a gown to wear. It was a prevalent fashion for ladies to wear cloth habits, and she, having one of red cloth, found all other dress unnecessary, and wore nothing else. Imagine a beneficed clergyman's wife in these days contenting herself

with such a costume for two years. But the fact illustrates the retired stile of living which contented her.

In the parsonage at Steventon she gave birth to five more children, Henry, Cassandra, Francis, Charles, and Jane.

There is nothing in which modern manners differ much more from those of a century back, than [in] the system pursued with regard to children. They were kept in the nursery out of the way not only of visitors, but of their parents; they were trusted to hired attendants; they were allowed a great deal of air and exercise, were kept on plain food, forced to give way to the comforts of others, accustomed to be over-looked, slightly regarded, considered of of [*sic*] trifling importance. No well stocked libraries of varied lore to cheat them into learning awaited them; no scientific toys, no philosophic amusements enlarged their minds and wearied their attention.

Little Francis, and his history may perhaps be a good account of the other boys, having been weaned, was removed from the parsonage to a cottage in the village, and placed under the care of a worthy [*page 4*] couple, whose simple style of living, homely dwelling, and out of door habits, for in the country the poor seldom close the door [by day] except in very bad weather, must have been very different from the heated nurseries, and constrained existence of the clean white-frocked and smooth-haired little gentlemen who are now growing up around us.

Across the brick floor of a cottage Francis learnt to walk, and perhaps it was here that he received the foundation of the excellent constitution which was so remarkable in after years. It must not be supposed that he was neglected by his parents; he was constantly visited by them both, and often taken to the Parsonage,

– and the text ends here, mid-page and mid-sentence. Catherine was wrong in stating that Mr Austen was appointed to the living of Deane before that of Steventon, and in assuming that Philadelphia Austen was already married before going out to India, but Francis himself may not have been able to give her precise information on these matters, so far back in family history as they were. Her generalisations as to what she believed to be the Spartan upbringing of late eighteenth-century children did apply in some families; the received wisdom at that time was that children should be fed mainly on bread and milk, suet puddings and cabbage, because meat would make them feverish and fruit would give them diarrhoea; it was also believed that too much excitement in adult company would result in death from meningitis, or ‘brain fever’ as it was then called. However, as can be seen from the early Austen family letters printed elsewhere in this *Report*, the Austen parents had no such fears, enjoyed the company of their young children and encouraged their infant games and chattering.

Apart from this all too brief essay, there is one of Catherine’s novels which has a little significance for Austen family history in later years: *The Stage and the Company*, published in 1858, contains reflections from Francis’s last appointment,

when he returned to sea again aboard HMS *Vindictive*, as Commander in Chief for the North America and West India Station from 1845-48, and took his two unmarried daughters Cassy Eliza (1814-49) and Fanny Sophia (1821-1904) along with him.

The action of *The Stage and the Company* supposedly takes place in about 1830-35, and the plot deals with the romances of the sisters Geraldine and Sidney Elliott,⁵ these being delayed by some very unlikely complications caused by doubts over what appears to have been their mother's clandestine marriage in 1810. The sisters go out to the West Indies, one in advance of the other; and Catherine's descriptions of a transatlantic voyage under sail, and of life in Bermuda, evidently come from information given by her father and sisters in their letters home to Portsdown Lodge. Catherine must have written the description of Portsmouth itself from her own knowledge, and the town later in the nineteenth century could not have been all that much different from what it was when Jane Austen visited it during her years of residence in nearby Southampton – which shows too what Jane envisaged Fanny Price had to endure.

Admiral Borlase was to hoist his flag in the *Wayward*, as commander in chief in the West Indies, and Sidney Elliott was to go with him across the Atlantic ... There was of course a world of preparation to be gone through whilst the flagship was fitting-out, and the family arranging themselves; and Admiral Borlase, with a true naval love of superintendence, naturally insisted on going down to Portsmouth, that he might inspect every part of the dockyard proceedings, and find fault with the inefficiency or dilatoriness of the workmen. In lodgings in High Street accordingly they took up their abode for the last three weeks of their stay in England, and had time enough to become almost as tired of the bustle, and as impatient of the delay as the Admiral himself.

At no particular time of the year is Portsmouth a delightful residence – at least to visitors accustomed to cleanliness, order, and good society. But probably December may be the worst period in which to visit this seaport. The dirt may then be considered at its height, the accumulation of mud in all the approaches to the town in the finest and most flourishing condition; the empty lodging houses give an air of desolation to the fashionable quarters; and the narrow streets, where two carriages can hardly pass abreast, whilst affording admirable lessons in patience and coachmanship, convince you that no narrow approach to civilisation ever was, or ever can be expected, from the inhabitants in general.

Mean, rough and dirty are the thoroughfares and the visitor may sometimes ask, does the population resemble the town in its ways and appearances? and wonder suspiciously how far the meanness, roughness and dirtiness extend.

The happy day at length arrived, when the *Wayward* set sail from Spithead, when the last friend had left the ship, the last farewell had been

spoken, when hurry and confusion ceased to be the order of the day, and uniformity, confinement, and sea sickness were to relieve Janet Borlase from the disgust and impatience she had experienced at Portsmouth, by taking their place.

Sidney watched the cliffs of the Isle of Wight as they sailed past with emotion, wondering when or how she should see them again, but they were soon shrouded in a snowstorm and lost to view. They ran down Channel before a fair wind, met with a gale off Scilly, were properly seasick, recovered entirely, and by the time they got into the Trades and warmer weather, were able to enjoy themselves as well as could be expected. There were all the usual ways of passing the day: saunters on the quarterdeck; stolen chats with some officers on duty, when the superiors were not looking; formal dinners in the wardroom; pleasant discussions with an intelligent and well-informed surgeon; lounges by moonlight; the invariable question as to their progress, and the daily guesses relative to when they should see land.

Bermuda first appears as ‘a small cloud that was pointed out to [Sidney] in the western horizon’, and when they arrive Mrs Borlase has the choice of accommodation either in the house of the Governor of Bermuda, or in Clarence Hill, the house of the outgoing Commander in Chief.

Everybody knows what the Bermudas are like: coral rocks and cedar trees, blue and red birds, and black men and women, flowers and orange trees, petty squabbles and petty scandal, soldiers, sailors, Yankees, English, natives; boats which beat all the world for sailing, and a climate which, though it has gradually deteriorated and become more and more subject to the fever, was at that time considered exempt from it. ... [However] February is usually a wet, cold, comfortless month there, and that February was more wet and cold than usual. It was miserable, and the new Admiral, instead of landing, resolved immediately to proceed to the West Indies, in search of a warmer climate and pleasanter weather. ... [but before he does] ... There was a state dinner and a grand ball at the Governor’s that evening, in honour of the new Admiral. Gentlemen, of course, preponderated, red and blue coats, with all the varieties of gold lace and epaulettes which their various ranks demanded ... [and the waltzing was] ... a whirl of white muslin and red coats.⁶

When John Henry Hubback was about 16, in 1860, he was sent up from Hampshire to work in Liverpool, where Hubback relations found him employment in the grain-broking trade, and Catherine and the other two boys joined him there. John Henry became a successful business man, married and had several children, one of whom, his daughter Edith Charlotte, collaborated with him in writing *Jane Austen’s Sailor Brothers* (1906). His two brothers both went to America: Catherine

went out with Edward in 1871 to California, and Charles followed them, settling in Virginia. It was while Catherine was visiting Charles and his wife that she died suddenly in 1877 and presumably is buried near his home; the dutiful John Henry set up a headstone for his father's grave in the churchyard of St Luke's, Brislington, and added a memorial inscription for his mother as well.

Notes

- 1 Deirdre Le Faye, 'Anna Lefroy and Her Austen Family Letters', in *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 62:3 (Spring 2001, pub. 2003), pp. 519-62; Cassandra's letter is 551-53.
- 2 Francis's letter is in the Austen-Leigh archive, Hampshire Record Office (23M93/84/1).
- 3 General information on Catherine Hubback and her family comes from John Henry's autobiography *Cross Currents in a Long Life* (privately printed, 1935); Diana Hopkinson, 'Peepshow on Victorian Life', in *Country Life* 30 March 1978, pp. 840-41; also 'Austens in America', *Country Life* 16 August 1979, pp. 468-69; David Hopkinson, 'The Later Life of Sir Francis Austen', in Jane Austen Society *Collected Reports* vol. 3, pp. 253-59; Maggie Lane, 'Jane Austen and Bristol' in *Collected Reports* vol. 3, pp. 318-19; and Robin Vick, 'John Hubback' in *Collected Reports* vol. 5, pp. 181-82.
- 4 As Catherine says 1760-64 is 'nearly a century ago', presumably she was writing in the 1850s. The original MS is now in the archives of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust at Chawton.
- 5 Sidney was then a neuter Christian name, like Hilary, Noel, and Evelyn, which could be given to either male or female children.
- 6 Quotations from *The Stage and the Company* are vol. III, pp. 62-3 and 84-88.

Jane, Henry and the Crutchleys

Chris Viveash

Writing to her sister, Cassandra, from Hans Place, London, Jane Austen enlightens her as to a grand plan by their brother Henry to visit Windsor: ‘... calling on the Birches & the Crutchleys...’. This letter was dated 23 and 24 August 1814, and it was followed by a further letter of 2 September 1814 to Martha Lloyd expanding the projected visit. Jane writes: ‘... we shall lengthen the Journey by going round by Sunning Hill; his favourite Mrs Crutchley lives there, & he wants to introduce me to her.’ This tantalising mention of a firm friend of the family for many years has proved a puzzle. It has previously been suggested that perhaps Mrs Crutchley was a widow of the deceased owner, who left a small son, and Henry Austen was now considering this wealthy widow as a prospective bride. However, this suggestion was quite wrong, as we shall now discover.¹



SUNNING HILL PARK,
BERKSHIRE.

The late, wealthy owner of Sunning Hill Park when the Austens wished to visit, was Jeremiah Crutchley, who was born in 1745. He became the owner of Sunning Hill Park at the early age of twenty-four, in June 1769. His father, also Jeremiah, had been an intimate of Ralph Thrale, the brewer. The Crutchley family were successful dyers and brewers in London. As young Jeremiah Crutchley was only

six years old when his father died, the Thrales took him under their wing.² There was a scurrilous rumour prevalent that Henry Thrale was young Jeremiah's father; throughout Henry Thrale's married life to the famous Mrs Hester Lynch Thrale, he suffered with bouts of venereal disease due to his constant womanising.'

The newly purchased Sunning Hill was pleasantly situated about six miles from Windsor; and when young Jeremiah took charge of the mansion one of his first actions was to commission the twelve-year-old John Flaxman to execute six black chalk drawings of figures from classical literature, for his new home. The great architect James Wyatt also took a hand in alterations and improvements to the house. There was a tranquil lake before the property which gave the estate a most welcoming aspect. Jeremiah allowed a free road through his grounds to enable everyone to enjoy the views and have access to the nearby Windsor forest.³ As Jane Austen has told us, we must accept that a man of good fortune will seek a wife, and the friends of Jeremiah Crutchley presented him with a few famous beauties from whom to select a bride.

In 1781 Sophia Streatfeild was brought before the young man, since it was thought she would entrance him. Both she and Hester Thrale had been tutored in Latin and Greek by the classicist Dr Arthur Collier, but Sophia would not acquiesce in the designs of Mrs Thrale. James Stanier Clarke, the Royal Librarian, was another attracted by the lovely Sophy's charms, but he also gave up the chase after years of sighing after her. The carefully laid plans for Jeremiah backfired spectacularly when Hester Thrale realised that her own husband was hotly determined to bed Sophia Streatfeild himself.⁴

Fanny Burney was then manoeuvred into position as a candidate for his hand. In 1778, Mrs Thrale had unsuccessfully tried to interest her in Jeremiah. Fanny asked: 'Who's he?' 'A young man of a very large fortune, said she...' but Fanny was unimpressed by the young man: 'I neither like nor dislike him...'. By 1781, however, Crutchley confided to Fanny Burney that he had sat to Ozias Humphrey for a miniature that his sister had wanted, but modestly added: 'he could never flatter himself there was a Human Being in the World to whom it could be of any possible value'. Fanny Burney did not, however, rise to this self-deprecating morsel of bait. In June 1781, Mr Crutchley decided to alter his hairstyle and improve his looks, by combing his curls into his back hair. The result was obviously grotesque, as Mrs Thrale cried out: 'Good God, why what in the World have you done to yourself... I never thought you so much of a coxcomb, but really to go thus is too bad.'⁵

It was during this period of visits to Mrs Thrale that Jeremiah Crutchley revealed that his sister Alice was intimate with the notorious adultress Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire: 'She came to my sister's ... to see Hare Hunting. ... She is very amiable ...' he confessed with admirable innocence. Dr Johnson was also a frequent visitor to Mrs Thrale's, and when he learned that she was to marry an Italian he burst into tears, and begged Crutchley to stay by him. Ultimately all plans to marry off Jeremiah Crutchley came to nothing as Mrs Thrale herself admitted, in May 1781: 'he is both ugly and awkward[sic] ... liberal & splendid



Sir Samuel Romilly



Lady Anne Romilly

To her Grace GEORGIANA Duchess of DEVONSHIRE.

Written in Passion Week, 1779.

SINCE ancient custom for a week suspends
The public revelry of pleasure's friends,
Since half the multitude desert the town,
Where mirth and tumult is a while unknown;
An humble Muse, unprivileg'd by fame
To grace her verses with thy noble name,
Attempts to profit by the present hour,
And breathe her wishes at Georgiana's door;
Where leisure may perhaps dispose the fair
To read, and to accept my lay sincere.

Yet what have I to wish, fair nymph! for thee,
Whom heaven has form'd to taste felicity?
What can the bounteous fates afford thee more,
For whom kind Fortune hath unlock'd her store!
Nature has made thee her peculiar care,
Completely good, and exquisitely fair,
Thy face in sunshine is for ever dress'd,
It beams reflected from thy virtuous breast,
Where gay good-humour dwells with gentleness,
And gives the power to please, the will to bless.
What can I wish thee, Devonshire! beside?
What more can heaven for thy content provide?

Grandeur and beauty, health and youth, are thine;
Fortune and pleasure for thy bliss combine,
And thou art favor'd by the tuneful nine;
Nor more enobled by illustrious birth,
Than by the splendour of intrinsic worth;
The vigues of thy mind the good revere—
The bad behold thee like an heavenly star,
That shines above the reach of mortal sense,
Inspiring awe, by its pre-eminence;
Thousands are vanquish'd by a smile from thee,
And thousands bless thy liberality.

When graceful in the mazy dance you move,
The women envy, and the men approve;
Sure by THEIR eyes Georgiana must have known
The charms, the power, the triumphs of her own.
Yet while enamour'd of her charms they gaze,
She neither courts, nor yet disdains their praise;
No supercilious airs in her are seen—
The frown of pride and insolence of mien,
To her unknown, are us'd by nymphs less fair—
Her's are the placid smiles, the jocund air
That nature, innocence, and youth impart,
To speak the feelings of a gen'rous heart.
Her affability delights the throng,
She charms the old, while she improves the young;
And slander in her conduct seeks in vain
To find one error, or to fix one stain.

What can I wish but that a fame so pure
May ever in meridian state endure;
That in a profligate and thoughtless age
Reason and honour may her mind engage;

Taken from Vol 2 of Lady Burrell's Poems 1793

*The Poems of the much-loved Author 1792 to
Lady Burrell.*

From Tho. S. Kenah.

To his dear Friend Whiter.

Sophia Crutchley

Thursday June 29th 1848.

BURRELL, Sophia, Lady. Poems. London: by J. Cooper, 1793.

Presentation copy from Lady Burrell to her husband. Then from
Juliana's brother-in-law, Thomas Kenah.

in large sums ... frigid & suspicious ... strangely mixed up of Meanness and Magnificence'.⁶ The obvious result was that he never married anyone and died a bachelor.

The result of so many disappointed love affairs decided Jeremiah to invite his sister, Elizabeth, to come and live with him as his housekeeper. Thereafter, he ultimately settled into the life of a country squire, serving as an M.P. and hunting with George III, who thought Crutchley was going to marry, during the period discussed above. 'Good God! What stuff for the King to think of!' was Jeremiah's retort to this rumour.⁷ The death of Jeremiah on 28 December 1805, aged 60, brought an interesting situation to the family.

The will of Jeremiah Crutchley was long and comprehensive. As expected, it was a tail male will and the nearest relative of the male sex to him was his sister Alice's son, George Henry Duffield; the Duffields lived at Syston, in Lincolnshire. One of the beneficiaries of the will outside the family was Richard Aldworth Neville, 2nd Baron Braybrooke. He was a close friend of Mr and Mrs Leigh Perrot, Jane Austen's uncle and aunt, and a benefactor from the Wargrave area, where he owned many acres. It was the young Lord Braybrooke who was one of the friends from Berkshire to give a character reference for Mrs Leigh Perrot; 'strictly honourable and unimpeachable' were two of the terms he employed at her Taunton trial for grand larceny, in 1800.⁸

As chief beneficiary to his uncle's will it was incumbent upon George Henry Duffield to change his name to Crutchley, in order to inherit Sunning Hill Park. On 8 April 1806 George Henry Crutchley, as he now was, married the pretty and wealthy Juliana Burrell, daughter of Sir William and Lady Burrell. (Jeremiah Crutchley and Lady Burrell are mentioned in Fanny Burney's subscription list for *Camilla*, together with Jane Austen.), How did the young people meet? As both the Duffields and Burrells had known links with the racy Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, perhaps at romantic Chatsworth? Were Lady Burrell's dedicated poem (see illustration) and Alice Duffield's Lincolnshire hare coursing, both arranged for the Duchess, the catalyst which brought forth this love affair? The newly wedded couple were certainly compatible, and great was their relief when the first child born was a sturdy son, Percy, named in memory of Juliana's brother, Percy Burrell, who had been killed on active service, leading an attack on Buenos Aires, in July 1807.

In November 1808, and again in February 1809, two very expensive hearings were called in London at the High Court of Chancery over the tail male will of Jeremiah Crutchley. Husband and wife, George Henry Crutchley and the former Juliana Burrell, were the appellants and the fact that the wife had brought a fortune of her own to the marriage was the issue. Coupled with this was Juliana's fears for the younger children of the marriage not being provided for. Counsel for the plaintiffs was the respected lawyer Sir Samuel Romilly (it was his wife, Lady Anne Romilly, who wrote to Maria Edgeworth: 'Have you read *Mansfield Park*? ... generally admired here ... true to life . . . good strong vein of principle ...').⁹ The presiding authority was the Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon, a staunch Tory.

As Romilly was a rabidly Whig party follower, a conflict might have arisen, but Eldon so much admired Romilly's powers of reasoning, that he generally gave his agreement with the judgement and sanctioned it.¹⁰

The long summing up of the Burrell-Crutchley hearing decided that Jeremiah 'settles his real estate [i.e. land] through his nephews, as tenants for life, and through their issue male; giving a power of jointuring the wives of the tenants for life, and two thirds parts of the portion [£15,000 Bank Annuities] should be settled upon the children: the husband taking the remaining third.' Then Juliana heard the news she had waited for: '... and clearly providing, that those two-thirds of the lady's fortune should go to all of her own children. As to the sum of £5000 [which George had the power to charge for the benefit of all younger children] that is not confined to any particular children; but extends to his younger children by any marriage.'¹¹

It was five years after this case that Jane and Henry Austen planned their visit to Sunning Hill, when the Crutchleys were settled with their own young children, Percy, Charles and little Elizabeth (just christened) playing around them. Henry would have undoubtedly wanted to renew his friendship with the former Juliana Burrell whose mother, Lady Burrell, was his wife Eliza's closest friend and who was kindness itself when Eliza de Feuillide returned from France, with her mother, back in 1786. By 1799, when she was Mrs Henry Austen, Eliza was living at Dorking, Surrey, and Lady Burrell had been assiduous in inviting her to Deepdene,¹² the estate of Sir William and Lady Burrell, described by Maria Edgeworth as 'so beautiful'. However, the death of Sir William Burrell had altered the situation, as his son, Sir Charles Burrell, now owned the estate. Although the widowed Lady Burrell had remarried, she still felt able to cosset Eliza, while Henry Austen was away soldiering in Ireland.

From the reference to Sunning Hill in Jane Austen's letter of 1814, it is obvious that Henry was anxious to see Juliana again, as she had risen in the world to the role of chatelaine of a very wealthy estate. Did the Austens manage to visit Sunning Hill, as proposed? There is no further mention of the Crutchleys in Jane's surviving letters, so this must remain open to speculation.

The Crutchleys continued providing male heirs for Sunning Hill until 1936, when it was sold to the merchant banker, Philip Hill. George VI purchased the property at the end of the war as a country retreat for Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, and work on refurbishment commenced in earnest when they married in 1947. However, a terrible fire destroyed the house that year, to Prince Philip's relief, as the house was so isolated 'that they would never have been able to keep a single maid there.' Prince Andrew, the present Duke of York, and his wife, Sarah, had their dream home built on the site of the walled garden, at a cost of £3.5 million, the Queen having purchased the parcel of land from the Crown Estate for the young couple.¹³ The ghost of Jeremiah Crutchley must have smiled broadly upon this new royal usage for his beloved Sunning Hill Park.

Notes

- 1 Le Faye, Deirdre, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford, 1995), p. 271, p. 273, p. 514.
- 2 Hyde, Mary, *The Thrales of Streatham Park* (London, 1977), pp. 28-9.
- 3 Neale, J. P. *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England* (London, 1818). Hakewill, James, *The History of Windsor and its Neighbourhood* (London, 1813), pp. 311-2. Weightman, C. *Cheapside in the Forest of Windsor*. (Ascot, 2000), pp. 91-94.
- 4 Viveash, Chris, *James Stanier Clarke* (Winchester, 2006), p. 69, p. 71; Hyde, p. 202, p. 218.
- 5 Troide, Lars, ed. *Early Journal of Fanny Burney* (Oxford, 1988), Vol. 4. p.169, p. 358, p.375.
- 6 Troide, p. 382. Clifford, J. L. *Hester Lynch Piozzi* (Oxford, 1987), p. 230. Balderston, K. C. *Thraliana* (Oxford, 1951) Vol. 1, p. 497.
- 7 Troide, pp. 426-27.
- 8 Gray, Rosemary, ed. *The Book of Wargrave* (Wargrave, 1986), p. 11, p. 13, p. 26. MacKinnon, Sir Frank Douglas, *Grand Larceny* (London, 1937), p. 108.
- 9 Gilson, David, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* (Winchester, 1997), p. 50, Viveash, Chris, 'Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth', *Jane Austen Society Collected Reports* Vol. 5, pp. 165-169.
- 10 Medd, Patrick, *Romilly* (London, 1968), p. 194.
- 11 *English Report No. 74*. (Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the High Court of Chancery). I am indebted to Ruth Bird (Bodleian Law Librarian) for her assistance in this matter. Sir Samuel Romilly slashed his own throat, upon the death of his wife Anne. This tragic suicide took place in the autumn of 1818. Lord Lansdowne said: 'When he lost her the very beat of his heart was stopped up.'
- 12 Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen's Outlandish Cousin* (London, 2002), pp. 156-58. Deepdene was sold in 1807 by Sir Charles Burrell to Thomas Hope, the influential furniture and interior designer. See David Watkin, *Thomas Hope 1769-1831 and the Neo-Classical Idea* (London, 1968), pp. 161-64. The poem by Lady Burrell dedicated to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire appears in Vol. 2 of her 1793 edition of *Poems* (London), pp. 68-70.
- 13 Bradford, Sarah, *Elizabeth* (London, 2002) p. 132, pp. 442-43, p. 461.

Throughout this article I have retained the usage Sunning Hill, as written by Jane Austen and Fanny Burney in their letters. It is now generally accepted as Sunninghill, not quite so appealing.

Mrs Sherwood's Secrets: Jane Austen's boarding-school at Reading in the 1790s

T.A.B. Corley

James Edward Austen-Leigh was the first to inform the world, in the 1870 *Memoir* of Jane Austen, that his aunt had attended the school of Mrs Latournelle in the Forbury of Reading.¹ That passing remark failed to make clear that Cassandra and their cousin Jane Cooper were fellow-pupils there from July 1785 until December 1786, shortly after Jane Austen's eleventh birthday. Only two anecdotes about these schooldays have survived. The Austen sisters were tipped half a guinea each in October 1785 by an elderly relative as he passed through the town, and a few months later all three pupils were allowed out to dine at a local inn with brother Edward (later Knight), then 18, and Jane Cooper's 15-year-old brother, also Edward.²

That would have been the sum of our knowledge, but for the sheer chance that a colourful description of this long-forgotten school happened to come from an entirely different source. Mrs Sherwood (1785-1851), later a very well-known writer on religious topics and a children's novelist, as Mary Martha Butt was a pupil there, although she did not join until 1791, five years after the Austen sisters had left. Over and above composing 75 books and several hundred articles, tracts and pamphlets, she was energetic enough to write up her reminiscences in 15 volumes of a manuscript *Diary*, estimated to contain 500,000 words. When in 1913, William and Richard Austen-Leigh published *Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters*, they were able to devote no fewer than three pages to an account of the school, drawn from *The Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood* (1910) by F.J. Harvey Darton, which included copious extracts from the *Diary*.³ Mrs Sherwood's gift of total recall, together with her vivid style, provide unforgettable background knowledge about how the school must have been run during the Austen girls' time at Reading.

The author of that 1910 volume was almost certainly a partner in Darton & Co., which in 1854 had published a 'chiefly autobiographical' *Life of Mrs. Sherwood* by her daughter Sophia Kelly, again based on the *Diary*.⁴ That earlier work had appeared during the early Victorian era of 'prudence and moral strictness', judged by an authority on nineteenth-century biography as having been at its height between about 1840 and 1875.⁵ Yet her *Life* contains a number of uncharacteristically frank passages, even touching on the taboo subject of sexual talk, namely the 'coarse and indelicate language' used by one or two pupils at the school. A comparable episode is related in the following section.

Darton, for his convenience during a busy publishing career, had a copy of the manuscript *Diary* typed out before embarking on the *Life and Times*. Although the original contains no tell-tale pencilled marks to indicate what to omit, the typescript excludes enough material to give the Darton version a blandness which

fails to reflect much of what went on at the school in Miss Butt's day.

Almost every Jane Austen biography of any length recycles from Darton's book the same particulars about the school. Officially entitled the Reading Ladies Boarding School, but known to the pupils as the Abbey-house, it occupied the medieval Gateway of Reading Abbey. That was in the Forbury, nowadays a municipal park, but then an open space surrounded by schools and private dwellings. The Gateway was joined to a commodious eighteenth-century residence which contained what the Diary calls a 'great dancing-room', large enough to be converted on occasion into a theatre.⁶ Dancing was clearly a favourite subject; the curriculum also sought to foster female accomplishments such as music, writing and spelling, needlework and drawing.

Mrs La Tournelle, whose real name was Sarah Hackett, was the nominal headmistress, but mainly acted as housekeeper and matron. She also supervised in the schoolroom a set of 'little people and inferior pupils', diverting them with anecdotes about London theatrical goings-on. Her so-called cork leg may have been a prosthetic one, to correct a short leg, but she was physically active and managed to kneel for morning prayers. The teaching side was organised by Ann Pitts, a somewhat showy former parlour boarder, then in her late twenties, who in 1789 became Mrs St Quentin. Three assistant teachers, unimpressive and poorly paid, covered basic subjects such as spelling and needlework, and perhaps some elementary French, as Mrs La Tournelle was never known to speak a word of the language.

The school was quite outward-looking. Music and dancing-masters came in from outside, and organised an annual dance for the pupils – the public could attend at a cost of 5 shillings per ticket – at the nearby Town Hall. Its proximity to Reading School for boys, then under the celebrated headmaster Dr Richard Valpy, led to senior pupils from each school being invited to the other's evening parties. In 1785, some if not all the girls probably attended a recital of Latin and Greek speeches and poems, when Reading School hosted a triennial visitation of Oxford dons.

After Ann Pitts married St Quentin in 1789, Mrs La Tournelle's school underwent significant changes, because St Quentin at once took over its direction.⁷ An accomplished teacher, celebrated as the author of some frequently republished textbooks, he soon increased pupil numbers from about 40 to 60. Born in Alsace, he had served as an attaché at the French Embassy in London, until he was forced to resign for running up gambling debts; he turned out to be both a spendthrift and without scruples of any kind. Dr Valpy brought him to Reading, but after working part-time at that school, St Quentin met Miss Pitts, leading to their marriage. Miss Butt became a pupil two years later.

Although the Austen sisters had doubtless been spared putting up with any fellow-pupil as strong-willed as Miss Butt, some examples of her conduct were included in Mrs Kelly's book, but mostly omitted by Darton. The school principals made much of Miss Butt as the sole parlour boarder; she was taller, older at sixteen when admitted, more articulate and decidedly priggish in publicly

proclaiming her rigid evangelical beliefs. When as a newcomer she brought her Bible into the schoolroom and ostentatiously began to read it, there was a 'hue and cry' among the other girls. On another occasion, she happened to pick up an – unnamed – novel, which she knew her parents had condemned, and was so shocked by what she read that she raised her eyes and intoned, 'God forgive me for my disobedience'. General laughter ensued, and the French teacher present cried, 'Mlle Butt is at her prayers!' She subsequently admitted that 'I gradually lost some of my simpler and childlike habits, and after a little while my Bible never saw the light'.⁸

Being candidly judgmental in her Diary about the staff, she showed her disdain for Mrs La Tournelle as 'having only an every-day, common mind', forgetting the physical comforts and matronly attention provided by that lady. While praising Mrs St Quentin as 'the most hospitable, generous, affectionate of human beings', whose charm had captivated her father, she regarded her as scarcely the 'kind of person to whom to entrust the education of a young girl'.⁹ Perhaps the teacher appeared to be worldly and over-indulgent; yet in fact she knew precisely how to deal with this at times difficult pupil.

When Miss Butt overheard a conversation in the dormitory, about 'something bad [indecent]' and her protests were met with defiance, she dressed and reported the culprits to Mrs St Quentin, who in consequence put them on a bread and water punishment for several days. Afterwards Miss Butt noted, 'I not unseldom observed the breaking-off of a discourse between two girls when I came near'. Another time, she became the ringleader of some systematic bullying of a girl whom they found to be 'supremely vulgar and offensive in her manners and habits'. Mrs St Quentin privately took Miss Butt into the garden and 'in the mildest and most delicate manner' pointed out how wrong-headed she had been. A short while later, when Miss Butt caught a fever and became semi-delirious, Mrs St Quentin earned her gratitude for the devoted nursing she received.¹⁰

The Diary says little about the teaching methods in the St Quentin era, apart from Mrs La Tournelle's task of looking after the youngest pupils and unteachables; whether Jane Austen at nine had been one of the former is not known. As to the general regime, it was far from the kind of school which kept the girls on the go from morning to bedtime. Mrs Kelly and Darton both mention that the senior girls were allowed to come in late to compulsory prayers; once their hour or two of lessons were over, 'no human being ever took the trouble to inquire where else we spent the rest of the day, between our meals', or 'so much as said, "Where have you been, mademoiselle?"'.¹¹

Whether the youngest pupils had such an easy time is debatable, but previously Jane Austen must have enjoyed sufficient leisure time to read all the novels, good and bad, to be found in the schoolroom, and was perhaps allowed to use the circulating library of Carnan & Smart, publishers of the *Reading Mercury* close by in the town's Market Place. She would not have had anything like the same reading opportunities at Steventon. Then in 1787, only a year after leaving school, she wrote the first of her *Juvenilia*. Scholars who have thoroughly investigated

those youthful tales agree that not only was she by then ‘deeply familiar with most of the English fiction of the eighteenth century’, but also ‘as familiar with the workings of fiction as a watchmaker with the interior movements and structures of a watch’.¹² Whatever she may have learnt from the curriculum, it seems likely that she served her apprenticeship as novelist at the school.

*

As Mrs Kelly’s book thus contained quite a few indiscreet and revealing passages, most of which Darton chose to overlook, some members of the Jane Austen Society wondered if the original Diary might have included other items of substantial interest to those exploring the school’s history. Any further background material, even if relating to a few years after the Austens’ time, would be very welcome.

Yet the manuscript Diary appeared to have vanished. Requests for information about its whereabouts, in *Notes and Queries* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, remained unanswered. Footnotes in two articles respectively published in the *Jane Austen Society Report* for 1996 and *Women’s Writing* for 1998, drawing attention to the missing Diary, once again yielded no results.¹³ As neither the National Register of Archives nor the *Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters* had any record of the Diary, it must either have been destroyed – perhaps by enemy action – or sent overseas.¹⁴ Then in 2003 Deirdre Le Faye happened to come across a small pamphlet, *The Value of Bread* (1981), basically reprinted in Darton’s work.¹⁶ That was an account by Henry, Mrs Sherwood’s husband-to-be, of his experiences in France, Switzerland and Germany in the wartime years between 1792 and 1795, and published on behalf of a Sherwood descendant by a Greek Orthodox organisation in Britain.

A series of letters to secure information in time brought our own enquiry nearer to fulfilment. The Greek Orthodox Information Service provided the address of the member of the family understood to hold the Diary, who divulged the fact that the entire Sherwood Archive had been sent to Sotheby’s some years earlier; a search of the auctioneers’ catalogue gave the date as 1983. It had then been sold to a British dealer, and then via an American bookseller to the Department of Special Collections at the University of California Library in Los Angeles.

When approached, UCLA at once sent a copy of its excellent ‘Finding Aid’ or Catalogue of the ‘Sherwood Family Papers, 1775-1850’. That surprisingly disclosed that, in addition to the Diary, there were six boxes of a Journal, raising the question of whether such an inexhaustible author could possibly have kept going *two* separate sets of reminiscences. Then the ‘Journal’ turned out to be the typescript prepared for Darton before he wrote his *Life and Times* in 1910.

Three of the Library’s senior staff, Genie Guerard, the Manuscript Librarian, Claire Bellanti and Jon Edmondson, willingly gave valuable assistance. Because our research interest was in the years 1790 to 1793, the Librarians kindly sent a CD Rom of that part of the Journal, which identified itself as the typed copy. The Diary proper was too fragile to be photocopied, so in the autumn of 2009, the

Secretary of the Jane Austen Society, Maureen Stiller, made arrangements, before attending the JASNA Conference, to visit UCLA. There she scrutinised the Diary, and compared it with the Kelly and Darton texts.

Only one passage turned out to have been omitted from Mrs Kelly's book, for reasons which soon became apparent. It ran as follows:

As a proof of the small degree of watchfulness exercised by our elders, Miss Cocker and I discovered in one of the many yards and bas courts of the Abbey that there was a shed over which there was a place in which hay was kept, and there was a ladder up to this place – now it occurred to us that this would be a delightful [place of] retirement – we had borrowed *Adele and Theodore* – I had never heard of it before. Having made our plan known to one or two more of our especial friends, we used to spend hours in that place, one reading whilst the other worked [at embroidery]. We were never missed, the Chevalier did not discover us here though there were few other places in which he would not have found us. We there I well remember read the history of the Duchesse de C with a delight which I shall never again feel in reading any narrative of the kind.

This episode dated from 1792-3, by which time St Quentin had invited to the school a number of émigrés from revolutionary France. The 'Chevalier' was the second son of an exiled French Marquis and, according to the Diary, a 'gay rattling young man, who had a compliment for every lady he saw' and nothing much to do.¹⁶ As his family lived next door to the school, he spent most of the day seated in the parlour or chatting up pupils in the garden or elsewhere, entertaining them with a mixture of 'high-flown' flattery in broken English and an assortment of antics. Miss Butt and Miss Anne Cocker, both over 18, had no interest for him; yet if their evidence is true, he spent much time in tracking down the younger girls in the many nooks and crannies of the old Gateway. Whatever may have followed, perhaps his pursuit of the girls encouraged the kind of smutty talk that had so shocked Miss Butt, who wrote that by then 'the establishment at Reading was every day becoming less and less like a school'.

St Quentin, preoccupied by what the Diary calls 'disorder in his private affairs' and having to deal with numerous matters to do with French and other associates, was seldom seen in the school, so that one of the émigrés had to undertake his teaching. His wife, already distraught by his absence night after night, gambling in the company of Dr Valpy and Dr Mitford (father of the author Mary Russell Mitford), seems to have done nothing to check the Chevalier's behaviour. By 1794, St. Quentin's debts were so great that the school had to be sold and its effects put up for auction. It was Miss Butt who assisted him by writing a novel, *The Traditions: A Legendary Tale*, which raised £325 – one subscriber being 'Miss Austen' – and helped him to set up a new school in Hans Place in London.¹⁷

Adelaide and Theodore by Mme de Genlis, first translated into English in 1783, comprises a sequence of 174 letters, on the general theme of educating 'young persons of both sexes'. Nowadays neglected as insipid and virtually unreadable, during this period the work became immensely popular, especially

among British governesses.¹⁸ In *Emma* Miss Taylor persuades Emma Woodhouse – never much of a reader – to learn about the Comtesse d'Ostalis, who is shown to be constantly bullied, rather than educated, by her aunt and surrogate mother, La Baronne d'Almane.¹⁹

The supremely gothic tale of the Duchesse de C– inserted into the second volume and quite unconnected with the book's principal theme, tells of a jealous husband who imprisons his wife, chastely infatuated with another man, for refusing to divulge her lover's name. She endures her captivity in conditions of 'misery and grief' for nine years; her husband once even gives her a potion which does not prove fatal, but he nevertheless announces that she has died. After his death she is released and reconciled with her family; an additional fault is that she has never confided in her mother. The author's final twist is that instead of marrying her erstwhile lover, she allows him to marry the daughter from whom she has been separated as part of her punishment. Miss Butt was clearly taken with the dramatic as well as improving nature of this fifty-page saga about the Duchess.

Maureen Stiller also found in the UCLA archives an undated letter of Miss Butt to her mother. The pupil was then learning the geography of England, a subject new to the curriculum, and fed Mrs St Quentin's poultry every day. Her closing remark was that she was last in the school but still one of the eldest. In 19th-century schools, pupils tended to be positioned in class according to their ability to answer questions on the lesson being taught. However articulate outside the classroom, perhaps she was not well versed in the school's curriculum. To sum up, thanks to much appreciated assistance at every stage, so ended the lengthy search for the elusive Diary. Mrs Sherwood's final secret turned out to be a shocking one, of a youth allowed to stalk young girls at a particularly vulnerable stage of their physical and mental development.

Mrs Sherwood's Diary is by far the most important source for – admittedly indirect – knowledge about the school which the Austens had attended. Jane Austen herself has given readers some clues about her own schooldays, not in any reminiscences but in her novels. In *Emma*, for instance, she needed a boarding school from which Harriet Smith could emerge as Emma's protégée. The Highbury school is portrayed as a reputable one, situated in a particularly healthy location; and so was its real-life counterpart in Reading. The headmistress, Mrs Goddard, is 'a plain, motherly kind of woman, who had worked hard in her youth'; Mrs La Tournelle had likewise been a diligent subordinate of her half-sister for 27 years until she inherited the school in 1783. Mrs Goddard currently occupied 'an ample house and garden, gave the children plenty of wholesome food, let them run about a great deal in the summer, and in winter dressed their chilblains with her own hands': much the same would have been true in Reading. There was no equivalent to Mrs St Quentin, whose striking brown complexion had already been allocated to Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*.²⁰ At Highbury, the senior teacher is shown to lack the intelligence or the energy to train the indecisive and suggestible Harriet, as the acute Mrs St Quentin would have done.

Both the actual – in the Austens' day – and the imagined schools were run in a somewhat lenient but on the whole orderly manner. It can only be a matter of regret that the school in Reading, within a few years of the Austens' departure, should have come into the hands of a totally unprincipled man, who caused it to go downhill so disastrously.

I am grateful to Deirdre Le Faye and Maureen Stiller for very helpful comments.

Notes

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The ships of Charles Austen

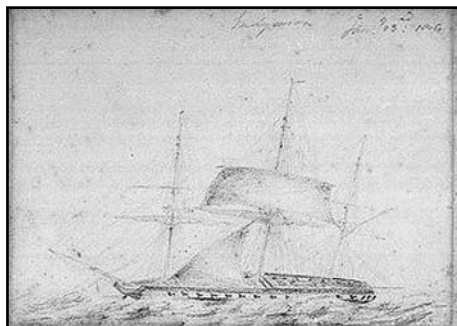
Clive Caplan

Charles John Austen was born on 23 June 1779, the eighth and last child of the Austen family. He was nearly four years younger than his sister Jane who, when he was almost 20, still referred to him as ‘our own particular little brother’. Charles was educated at home by his father, the Revd George Austen, and then followed his brother Frank by being trained for the sea at the Royal Naval Academy, Portsmouth. He entered the Academy on 20 July 1791 at the age of 12, and left three years later, on 14 September 1794, to join HMS *Daedalus*. His opportunity to go to sea came through an arrangement with the ship’s captain, Thomas Williams, who was an Austen relative through marriage.

September 1794 – July 1795: *DAEDALUS* (32 guns, with a main battery of twenty-six 12-pounders), was a frigate of 703bm (builder’s measurement, aka tonnage), and had a crew of 250 men. The ship had been launched on 20 May 1780 as one of a class of eight vessels intended for service on the North American station. She returned home in 1784 only to be laid up. On the outbreak of war with France in March 1793 she was recommissioned and assigned to the North Sea fleet under Admiral Duncan. Duncan’s responsibilities included observation and blockade of the Dutch fleet in the Texel, suppression of privateers, and protection of British trade with the Baltic. Captain Williams served nearly a year in *Daedalus* and then in July 1795 was reassigned to command *Unicorn*. His young protégé Charles transferred to this new ship with him.

July 1795 – March 1797: *UNICORN* (32, main battery of twenty-six 18-pounders) was an almost new frigate of 791bm and a crew of 257, launched on 12 July 1794. When Williams became her captain a year later the ship was assigned to the Irish station. This was an area which needed to be carefully watched, for the local population was disaffected and the French were planning invasion. The ship was soon in action: on 29 August, while cruising in company with *Diana* (38) and *Seahorse* (38), *Unicorn* took two prizes: an East Indiaman, and a South Sea whaler, and the next day captured *Comet* (18), the Dutch brig of war which had escorted them from the Cape of Good Hope. It was the next summer, on 8 June, when Williams performed an outstanding feat: his *Unicorn* overcame the French frigate *La Tribune* (44), after a running fight off the Scilly Islands of 210 miles, remarkably without suffering a single casualty; the action earned him a knighthood. Then on 21 October *Unicorn* took the privateer *L’Entreprise* (6) and on 7 January 1797 assisted at the capture of *Ville de L’Orient*, a ship packed with 400 hussars trying to return home after an abortive attempt to invade Ireland through Bantry Bay. Four days later the privateer *L’Eclair* (18) became yet another prize. Such continued successes gained Sir Thomas promotion to be captain of an outstanding new vessel, the *Endymion*; and once again Charles was fortunate enough to be taken along.

April 1797 – 17 December 1797: *ENDYMION* (50), 1239bm, crew 340. This heavy frigate was a prestigious ship. She had just been launched, at Rotherhithe on 29 March 1797, and was a copy of the much admired French frigate *Pomone*, which had been captured on 23 April 1794. With the *Endymion* the Admiralty was able to introduce into the gun deck of its frigates a powerful battery of twenty-six 24-pound cannon, not to mention fourteen 32-pound carronades on her quarterdeck. She was also the fastest navy ship of her time, clocking a speed of 14.4 knots (16 mph) in a run.



HMS Endymion (Admiral Sir Charles Henry Paget)

Endymion, once made ready, became part of the North Sea fleet.¹ Admiral Duncan was still in command, and his ships were at their base at Great Yarmouth, refitting and replenishing supplies. On 10 October Duncan received intelligence that the Dutch fleet had at long last made a sortie out of the Texel and he immediately put to sea, with whatever of his ships were ready. Next day he won a decisive victory over the Dutch at Camperdown. Charles's *Endymion* was unable to put in an appearance until the 12th, when she was sent to harry the Dutch survivors. On the following day she found a fugitive Dutch ship-of-the-line, the *Brutus* (74), and went in to the attack, exchanging broadsides with her vastly more powerful opponent for an hour, until tide, wind, and shelving waters brought a halt. When dawn broke next day *Brutus* had retreated far upstream, out of reach. *Endymion* had sustained only minor damage and no casualties. The eighteen-year-old Charles was rewarded with a commission as a lieutenant, which advancement meant leaving both his ship, and Sir Thomas, his attentive patron.

18 December 1797 – 9 January 1799²: *SCORPION* (16), launched 26 March 1785, was of 340bm and had a crew of 121 men. She was an example of an 'old-built sloop', like Captain Wentworth's *Asp* in *Persuasion*. About thirty such ships were in the navy at the outbreak of war in 1793. They were scaled down copies of larger vessels, built with an elevated forecastle and quarterdeck, and lightly armed with six-pounder cannon. Later sloops were built flush-decked. Charles Austen was a junior lieutenant and from March 1798 his commander was John Tremayne Rodd. The ship was assigned to the North Sea station and on 26 April, off Flamborough Head, took the Dutch privateer brig *Le Courier*

(6) and recaptured its British prize, *Lark*, a coal brig out of Whitby. Rodd gained promotion to post captain on 7 September, and left the ship, whereupon Charles became unhappy with his posting, which was certainly a come-down after the *Endymion*. On 18 December Jane wrote to her sister Cassandra that ‘our dear Charles begins to feel the Dignity of Ill-usage’ and that their father would write to Admiral Gambier about him (*Letters*, 26). Gambier was First Naval Lord and the patron of Frank Austen. The Admiral at first replied that ‘it is usual to keep young officers in small vessels ... where they are more in the way of learning their Duty’ (*Letters*, 28), but on 28 December Jane was able to write that ‘Lieut. Charles John Austen is removed to the *Tamer* [sic] Frigate’ (*Letters*, 32).

10 January 1799 – 24 February 1799: *TAMAR* (38) was a fir-built frigate, of 999 bm. The ship was launched 26 March 1796, there was a crew of 270, and the captain was Thomas Western. Charles had got his wish for a frigate and was commissioned a junior lieutenant in *Tamar*. However, the ship had just returned from active service in the West Indies and required an extensive refit – fir-built ships lacked durability. Charles’s sense of ill-usage continued, someone pulled strings, and after just six weeks he was maneuvered back again to *Endymion* (*Letters*, 39), and reunited with Sir Thomas Williams, still her captain.

25 February 1799 – January 1801: *ENDYMION* (50). Now in his second posting to *Endymion*, Charles rose to be second lieutenant. The ship’s initial station was in the Bay of Gibraltar, suppressing a nest of privateers based across the bay at Algeciras. Then, closer to home, the ship began a flurry of prize taking. On 14 February 1800 *Endymion*, in company with *Amazon* (38), took the French privateer *Le Bougainville* (18) in the Channel. The following day *Endymion* recaptured the British vessel *Trelawny* and the day after that retook the *Elizabeth*, thus twice earning the rewards of salvage. Two Spanish privateers came next: *Saint Joseph* (4) thirty-eight men, and *El Intrepido* (2) twenty-one men; also the French *La Paix* (10) with a cargo intended for Mauritius; and finally, after an arduous chase, *Le Scipio* (18) and 149 men. Charles and another four men – all who could be spared – formed the prize crew for *Le Scipio*. They had to board the French ship during a gale and then keep the enemy crew in subjection until the next day. By 17 May *Endymion* was back at Spithead, then off again, escorting home in June a convoy from the Straits of Gibraltar. In *Unicorn* and in *Endymion* Sir Thomas had been extremely successful, capturing fifteen privateers of various sizes, totaling 150 guns and 900 men, and he was now further advanced to the command of a ship-of-the-line, the *Russell* (74). *Endymion*’s new captain was Philip Durham. He had made his name in command of the sloop *Spitfire* (16) by making the very first capture of the war, the French privateer *L’Afrique*, on 13 February 1793.

January 1801 – 23 June 1802: Durham took command of *Endymion* on 24 February 1801 and was ordered to Lisbon to watch over British interests, for Portugal had been invaded by France and Spain in the short-lived ‘War of the Oranges’. The ship stayed there for several weeks and then transported home the King’s son, Prince Augustus, whose health had been benefitting from the mild

Iberian climate. Back out on patrol on 13 April *Endymion* captured *La Furie* (16), a French privateer about to attack a convoy from Brazil, and then returned to Portsmouth on 24 May (*Letters*, 89). On 27 May Jane Austen wrote that ‘The *Endymion* has already received orders for taking Troops to Egypt’ (*Letters*, 91), referring to the successful British campaign to expel the French from Egypt, begun on 7 March, and now requiring reinforcements. *Endymion* was then sent to St Helena, to convoy home a group of ten merchantmen from the East India Company and arrived back home in February 1802, to find peace with France in the air. (Later Durham was to be at Trafalgar as captain of *Defiance* (74), where he was twice wounded.)

24 June 1802 – 1 April 1803: Charles was ashore. The Peace of Amiens had become final on 25 March 1802, though preliminaries had been signed earlier, on 1 October 1801. Britain demobilized and cut her fleet of ships-of-the-line from 100 to 40. Charles left *Endymion* and went onto half pay. He had a novel experience on 13 March 1802, when he gave evidence in a trial for murder at the Winchester Assizes. A fellow officer, Lieutenant Henry Thomas Lutwidge, with whom he had served on the *Endymion*, was the accused. A host of character witnesses succeeded in reducing the charge to one of manslaughter (*Naval Chronicle*, vii, 251-57, 1802). Charles holidayed with his family, stayed with his brother James at Steventon, and visited his brother Edward at Godmersham. On 18 May 1803 war with the French resumed, and Britain had to rearm hastily; the Peace of Amiens had been but a temporary respite. Charles returned to duty, and for the third time joined *Endymion*, where he now had the distinction of being the first lieutenant. (Charles’s long association with this fine vessel was to be marked by Jane Austen with the inclusion of the ship’s name in her text of *Mansfield Park*.)

2 April 1803 – 1 August 1804: *ENDYMION* (50). Charles now found his captain to be the Hon. Charles Paget, fifth son of the 1st Earl of Uxbridge, who was reputed to be of a tyrannical disposition (Southam, 281). *Endymion* was assigned to the Channel fleet under Admiral Cornwallis, to be part of his celebrated blockade of Brest. As befitted a vessel of such speed and power, the ship was soon taking prizes again. On 25 June 1803, after an eight-hour chase, she captured the French corvette *Bacchante* (18) with 100 men, trying to return to Brest from Santo Domingo. In July she augmented her crew by pressing men from an incoming West Indiaman, and took *L’Adour* (20, flute). In August it was the turn of *Le Général Moreau* (16), a privateer schooner with 85 men. During the gales of the following winter *Endymion* still kept the sea, sustaining repeated damage to spars and rigging, and making occasional hasty visits to Plymouth for refit and victualling. By May 1804 she was back on station, harrying innumerable small craft, and maintaining surveillance over the enemy ships bottled up in Brest, Ferrol and Corunna. Charles’s continued sterling performance persuaded Captain Paget to recommend his promotion, and a visit back to port gave him the chance to leave the ship. Jane had known that something was in the offing, for she had retailed some family gossip on 14 September: ‘my Mother had previously told my Aunt ... that a sloop ... was reserved in the East for Charles’ (*Letters*, 93).

Charles's promotion to be the commander of the sloop *Indian* dated from 10 October 1804. This advancement must have been devoutly wished for, and rejoiced over when it came, but for Charles it turned out to be a financial disaster. *Endymion* returned to station without him, and in January and February 1805 literally struck gold, taking as prize no fewer than four Spanish treasure ships; one, the *Brillante* from Veracruz, carried 88 chests of money, and another from Lima yielded 240 boxes of dollars. Paget's share of the proceeds was £50,000,³ and *Endymion's* three lieutenants shared £12,000. Poor Charles – bad timing!

10 October 1804 – 9 May 1810: *INDIAN* (18) was a new flush-decked sloop of 399 bm, built in Bermuda of sturdy cedar, and having an official crew of 121 men. She was heavily armed for her size with sixteen 24-pounder carronades and two 6-pounder long guns,

1805: It was April, and *Indian* was fitting out in Bermuda. Charles advertised for volunteers to join his crew,⁴ but his inducement of the possibility of prize money failed to attract a full complement of recruits. The ship's maiden voyage was to Halifax where Charles arrived on 6 August and quickly got down to business. Working in concert with the frigate *Cleopatra* (32), he took three prizes over an eight day period.⁵ First was *Dydden*, a Swedish⁶ merchant vessel with a cargo of wine, on 23 August. Two American vessels followed: *Sally* on 24 August, and *Ocean* on 1 September. Merchantmen, of any nationality, who intended to break Britain's trade embargo against Napoleon's Europe became fair game.

1806: *Indian* began by capturing the Spanish schooner *Rosalie* on 1 March, this time in company with *Busy* (18), but in April was back in Bermuda, needing to press men for her still short-handed crew. There was a scary time out at sea, from 4 to 6 May, when the ship was confronted by four French frigates. Fortunately the sea was in a dead flat calm and *Indian* escaped by using her sweeps to row away out of trouble. Undismayed, *Indian* then captured a fine cluster of prizes over an extended eight week cruise: another Spanish schooner, *Lustorina*, loaded with coffee, on 25 May; two more American ships, *Friends Adventure* on 1 June and a second *Sally* on 12 July; and a third Spanish schooner, *Nuestra Señora de Carmen*, on 25 July.

1807: Early in the year *Indian* took three more American vessels: *Baltic*, *Joseph* and *Eliza*, on 10 January, 22 March and 19 April. On the home front, Charles made a conquest of a different kind – he married Frances Palmer, a seventeen-year-old Bermudan girl on 17 May. In June *Indian* became part of a British squadron under Admiral Berkeley blockading Chesapeake Bay, where French warships were welcome to resupply or refit, but British vessels were not. The chronic problem of the desertion of British sailors to the United States then came to the fore.⁷ American citizenship was available for the asking and pay and conditions were far better for men in the American service. On 22 June, acting under Berkeley's orders, HMS *Leopard* encountered the USS *Chesapeake* and delivered three broadsides before the American could be persuaded to allow a search. Four British deserters were removed. The US was apoplectic, and an open war seemed likely. President Jefferson's initial response, on 2 July, was to forbid

British ships to enter American ports, and to deny them supplies. *Indian*, which needed resupply, had to return to Halifax on 26 July. President Jefferson then followed up with his extraordinary Embargo Act of 22 December which ordered all American shipping to remain in port.⁸ His simple idea was that if the ships did not go to sea, then they could not be stopped and searched, and neither could their crews be impressed. Britain's response was to criticize Admiral Berkeley for his injudicious policy and to recall him home.

1808: Prize taking became less easy, with the disappearance of most targets: American shipping now lay idly in harbour, thanks to the Embargo Act; Spain, forcibly occupied by French troops, had become a British ally; and from 1 January Britain and the United States had outlawed the slave trade. So Charles necessarily focused his attention on the French. On 19 June *Indian* captured *La Jeune Estelle* (4), a French privateer schooner with a crew of 25 men *en route* from Florida to Santo Domingo with supplies.⁹ Charles took no chances, put aboard a large prize crew of 3 officers and 20 men, and sent the ship to Bermuda. (This was Charles's only exploit in *Indian* thought worthy of the *London Gazette* – his dispatch appeared on its front page on 20 August.) In July there was a problem with the balance of *Indian*'s ballast which had to be corrected by the Halifax dockyard. Once at sea again, on 24 November, in concert with the Bermuda schooner *Vesta* (4), Charles captured a French schooner in transit from Guadaloupe to Washington with a cargo of sugar. He again installed quite a large prize crew of 12 men with two midshipmen. Heavy weather parted *Indian* from her prize. Unfortunately it was never seen again, and had to be assumed lost. In a letter to Cassandra from Bermuda, dated 24 December, Charles bemoaned both the loss of his irreplaceable men, and of his prize (*Sailor Brothers*, 209-10; *Letters*, 169).

1809: No prizes are recorded and *Indian* spent a prolonged period (from 14 September to 29 November) undergoing a major overhaul in the Halifax dockyard. Four days after the ship's arrival in port six men were executed for a mutiny on the brig *Columbine* (18), emblematic of the manpower troubles of the North American station. During this enforced time ashore in Halifax Charles had his wife Fanny and baby Cassandra with him, and the couple took the opportunity to have their ten-month-old baby baptized, on 6 October. One of the baby's sponsors was Captain Edward Hawker, whose frigate *Tartar* (32) had assisted in Charles's capture of his second American ship named *Sally*. Next spring, a twist of fate finally propelled Charles into a long awaited promotion: to be a post captain, and to command a ship-of-the-line.

10 May 1810 – 25 September 1810: *SWIFTSURE* (74), of 1704 bm, had been launched on 23 July 1804, had a crew of 590 and had been one of Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar. The captain was John Conn, who had fought at Trafalgar as the captain of *Dreadnought* (98). On 4 May 1810 Conn came to an untimely end, in a manner still unclear. According to the master's log (ADM52/4627): 'at 4.30 Fell Overboard John Conn Esq^r. Captain hove too Lower'd both Yawls & used the utmost Endeavours to save him but unfortunately without Effect'. On 12 May the *Bermuda Gazette* reported 'Conn ... fell overboard, while the ship was in chase,

going at a rate of 8 knots ... he unfortunately perished'. However, this account was erroneous, for the log records that the ship was not in chase at the time and that its speed was only 3 knots, a sail having split. On 20 May a totally different story was printed in the *Royal Nova Scotia Gazette*: that Conn 'fell out of the cabin window, having, it is supposed, overreached himself while observing some painting that had been done to the stern of the ship'. This is a very unlikely tale. Finally there is the most startling version: that Conn actually 'jumped overboard in a fit of temporary derangement, and was drowned'. The Captain may have died a suicide.¹⁰

Conn had been flag captain to Sir John Borlase Warren, who was Admiral Berkeley's replacement as commander of the North Atlantic squadron. Warren now urgently needed a new flag captain, and Charles Austen was his choice. On 29 May both Charles's ships, new and old, *Swiftsure* and *Indian*, came into Halifax together from Bermuda. Fanny and baby Cassandra were on board, and they spent two months in Halifax. Later that summer *Swiftsure* criss-crossed the Atlantic with a convoy transporting the 1st Battalion of the 7th Regiment of Foot from Halifax to join Wellington's forces in Portugal. The ship reached the Peninsula in late July and returned on 3 September, after a return passage of 37 days. Charles then learned that he was to be transferred from *Swiftsure* to be captain of the frigate *Cleopatra* (32).

26 September 1810 – 27 August 1811: *CLEOPATRA* (32), 677 bm, crew 220, launched 26 Nov 1779. Charles's appointment to this ship coincided with a change in the top command of his North American station. Vice-Admiral Warren, who had served for three years, was replaced by Rear-Admiral Herbert Sawyer. Charles eventually brought *Cleopatra* back to England and arrived home in July 1811, but was then superseded as captain by Samuel John Pechell. However, the name of this particular ship was to be honoured by Jane Austen by its inclusion in the text of *Mansfield Park*, together with the name of his *Endymion*. After all, was not *Cleopatra* the ship which had brought him home to England after more than six years' absence?

Three months after coming ashore, on half pay, with a wife and two young children to support, Charles lacked money and employment. His old time family friend and patron Sir Thomas Williams then provided an opportunity. Sir Thomas had been appointed commander of the Nore station, in the Thames estuary, and required a flag captain for his flagship *Namur*. He recruited his needy protégé Charles for the job.

16 December 1811 – 30 September 1814: *NAMUR* (originally 90 guns, but cut down to 74 in 1804) was a large two decker of 1814 bm. The ship was launched on 3 March 1756 and being 55 years old was now suitable only for harbour service, and was being used as a receiving ship. Charles's financial situation must have been quite desperate for him to accept this posting. A receiving ship was a worn out hulk, responsible for taking on board the wretched victims of the press, stuffing them below decks in appallingly overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, and then shipping them out to fill up the crews of waiting vessels. Not only did

Charles become captain of this wreck, but he fatally brought his wife and young family to live on board with him. Fanny had already given birth to her third baby in London in 1812 – her parents and her spinster sister Harriet lived there – but in 1814, while still on board *Namur*, she went into premature labour with her fourth child. This was not anticipated, and her desired removal was prevented by inclement weather. She delivered on 31 August, but then sickened, and tragically she died on 6 September. Two weeks later her baby also died (*Family Record*, 216). Only a few days after this Sir Thomas Williams's three-year period of command ended. This meant that the grief stricken Charles was superseded in *Namur*, although somehow he was immediately given an assignment to sea duty in command of the frigate *Phoenix* (36). His three motherless young girls were packed off to Harriet in London, and he and the *Phoenix* were ordered away to the Mediterranean.

1 October 1814 – 6 July 1816: *PHOENIX* (36) 884 bm, crew 270, launched 15 July 1783.¹¹ A few months after Charles took command of *Phoenix* the peace of Europe was shaken by the escape of Napoleon from Elba on 1 March 1815, and his return to power in France. Charles had been first assigned to the western Mediterranean, and he wrote to his sister Jane from Palermo, Sicily, on 6 May (*Sailor Brothers*, 270). The Bourbon King Ferdinand (of the Two Sicilies) had been driven from the mainland Neapolitan portion of his realm by the French, and was being maintained on his other kingdom, Sicily, by the power of the British navy. Charles was under the orders of Lord Exmouth (the former Sir Edward Pellew) and was then sent to the Adriatic as commodore of a small detachment consisting of *Phoenix*, *Undaunted* (38) (which had taken Napoleon to Elba in April 1814) and *Garland* (22). His mission was to coordinate action with the Austrians, and to blockade the Adriatic coast of Murat's Kingdom of Naples, which was allied with Napoleon. The city of Naples itself was first to return to its allegiance to King Ferdinand, on 20 May 1815. Charles was then successful in persuading the garrison of Brindisi, and two large frigates in the town's harbour, to follow suit peacefully, thereby meriting the particular praise of Lord Exmouth. *Phoenix* was then sent further east to the Aegean Sea, with *Aquilon* (32), *Garland* and the brig-sloop *Re(y)nard* (10), to hunt for a French flotilla disrupting commerce, but the enemy could not be found. Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo on 18 June, and abdicated for the second time on 14 July. Although hostilities were thus ended, the navy was still in demand as a peace-keeping force. Charles's squadron operated with some success against the pirates of the Greek Archipelago, but then, on 20 February 1816, came disaster. Charles lost his ship.

Phoenix had been visiting the port of Smyrna (Izmir) on the western coast of Asia Minor, when orders were received from Admiral Lord Exmouth to proceed immediately to Gibraltar for a rendezvous with a fleet under Sir Charles Penrose. Action was being contemplated against the Barbary States to enforce the end of piracy, and of their practice of Christian slavery. *Phoenix* set off in heavy weather and was soon forced to take refuge from the storm in the nearby harbour of Chisme (Cesme), 53 miles west of Smyrna (Chisme lies opposite the Greek



Admiral Sir Edward Pellew, 1st Viscount Exmouth (Sir Thomas Lawrence)

island of Chios, and was once the western terminus of the Silk Road). *Phoenix*, buffeted by gale force winds from the south-west, laid out her three anchors and prepared to ride out the storm, but it was to no avail. The winds grew in intensity and shifted to the north and *Phoenix* was caught in the worst nightmare of every captain – to be pinned against a lee shore, and then to be helplessly driven onto it. In the last extremity the ship's masts were cut away to reduce top hamper, but still the anchors dragged, and still the ship was forced ashore, and still inevitably wrecked. The remarkable thing was that not a man was lost from the crew.

Charles apparently remained on site supervising salvage of the ship's guns and naval stores, which were put aboard *Renard* and a chartered merchantman, and transported away to Malta. Any remaining useful residue was sold to a local agent for 600 dollars. On 2 March what was left of the wreck was burned.

A court-martial was mandatory for any captain who had lost his ship. Charles's was held on 22 April, on board Lord Exmouth's flagship *Boyne* (98) in the Bay of Tunis. He was fully acquitted of all blame and the disaster was conveniently attributed to the ignorance of his Greek pilots. He then returned to England at the end of June, officially adjudged innocent, but aware that with the demobilization of peacetime and his somewhat inevitable notoriety, it was unlikely that he would be further employed.

1816 – 1820: Now Charles was 'on the beach', and had perforce to spend more time with his family. He went to live with his Palmer in-laws in London, where his sister-in-law Harriet was mothering his three daughters. He paid a prolonged visit to the Austen family at Chawton in November to January 1817, but was distracted in March by the illness of Harriet Jane, his second daughter. In April he received his last letter from an ailing Jane Austen, dated the 6th (*Letters*, 338-9), and becoming anxious, visited her on her sickbed in Winchester from 13 to 20 June. On the 19th he wrote in his diary: 'Saw her twice & in the evening for the last time in this world as I greatly fear, the Doctor having no hope of her final recovery' (*Family Record*, 252). A month later he received, in a letter from Cassandra, the news that Jane had died on 18 July. At the time he was staying at Eastbourne with the Palmers, and was too far away to attend the funeral.

22 February 1820 – 1 June 1826: After a few years of retirement on half-pay Charles, either needing the money or being bored with his life, took a job ashore as an Inspecting Commander in the Coastguard. Smuggling had taken on a new lease of life at the end of the French wars. Many discharged and unemployed men from the army and navy had found it to be a congenial and remunerative activity. Needing to augment the policing of their coasts, the authorities signed up unemployed navy officers, and tried to recruit them from a distance so that they would not have to spy on their friends. Charles's initial posting was to the Coastguard district at Padstow, on the north Cornish coast.¹² Mrs Austen had written a letter on 21 February 1820 (*Family Record*, 263) describing his duties: he would patrol the coast on horseback and if he saw anything suspicious would send out his boats and men, but would not go himself. He rented a cottage, and in May Harriet and his children came to stay, and on 7 August he and Harriet were married. The difficulties of his new employment appear in this report of an incident occurring in his district (*The Times*, 1 December 1820):

A large smuggler cutter, mounting 16 guns, having contrived to land 500 tubs of spirits near Padstow, Cornwall, they were discovered by the vigilance of the boatmen belonging to the Boscastle Preventive Service, and soon taken possession of. The smuggler, however, on his side, was also on the alert; and, being unwilling to leave his choice spirits in the hands of these unsparing

Philistines, he determined to make a bold push to recover his booty. He accordingly manned his boat with a stout gang of determined fellows, who approached the shore, and effected a rescue, carrying off not only the smuggled property, but the preventive boat, and all her materials into the bargain!

In midsummer 1822, after two years at Padstow, Charles was transferred to the Plymstock district, two miles from Plymouth (*Austen Papers*, pp. 266-73). For four more years he continued a Coastguard Inspecting Commander until, out of the blue, he again stepped into Dead Man's Shoes. The death was that of Captain John Maxwell, of HMS *Aurora* (31 May 1826).

2 June 1826 – 23 December 1828: *AURORA* (38), 1083 bm, and a crew of 300. This ship was originally a typical 40 gun French frigate named *La Clorinde*, built and launched at Nantes 8 August 1808, and like many another typical French frigate she had been captured – out in the Atlantic on 26 February 1814 – by the British frigates *Dryad* (36) and *Eurotas* (38). She was taken into the British service and renamed *Aurora*. In the late afternoon of 31 May 1826 the frigate was lying in Plymouth Sound, on the verge of sailing with a convoy for the West Indies, when she lowered her flag to half staff. Her captain, John Maxwell, had just died. Charles himself tells us what happened next in a letter to Sir Robert Liston dated 'H.M.S. Aurora at Sea 4th July 1826':

By the awefully sudden death of Captain Maxwell which took place as this ship was getting under weigh for the West Indies, she became vacant, I immediately applied for her, stating my readiness to start at a moments warning for any part of the World. *By return of Post* [emphasis added] to my great surprise I received my Commission and on the following day we sailed, so here I am commanding one of the finest and best appointed Frigates that we have in Commission. ... My poor wife suffered much from the suddenness of my leaving her though I know not that it would have been any better had we had more time to think of it; The separation from my Family was doubtless most painful, but Sailors are bound for all weathers! and I trust all will turn out for the best; I do not expect that my absence will exceed two years. (Trustees of the National Library of Scotland, MS.5676, f.87).¹³

Charles appeared for divine service on the deck of the *Aurora* as her new captain on the morning of Sunday 4 June. On the 5th, after a ceremonial burial on shore for Captain Maxwell, he took the ship out to sea. *Aurora* was headed for Jamaica and the West Indies station. Her mission: to suppress the slave trade.

Britain and the United States had both decreed the abolition of the slave trade in 1807/8, and France and Spain had followed suit after the fall of Napoleon. However the trade still existed, though it had now become clandestine. Well-meaning British efforts at enforcement met many hurdles: France and Spain resented British hegemony; slave states asserted that their agriculture (and their profits) would wither away; and Britain was accused of hypocrisy, for slave-

grown sugar and cotton were still her two main imports. In practice Charles was faced with several major difficulties. First, there was the knotty problem of ‘stop and search’, without which no intercepted ship could be proved to be a slaver, but which no ship of a self-respecting nation would allow; secondly, there was the pervasive practice of flying flags of convenience; and third, the common use of expertly forged papers. In spite of these difficulties Charles himself reported that he had been ‘most successful in crushing the slave trade’ (*Jane Austen and the Navy*, 53). As well as being captain of *Aurora*, Charles was second-in-command of the Jamaica station. This involved him in international diplomacy, and in February and March 1827 he travelled overland to confer with Simon Bolivar in Caracas, Venezuela. Bolivar sought British protection for his Confederation of independent South American states, and was pleased enough with Charles’s efforts to present him on 1 March with an inscribed sword. Charles also endeared himself to his crew. He pardoned many of their minor offences and did not lose a man during his tenure, either through action or through sickness. At the end of his captaincy his grateful men presented him with a silver salver. This may have softened the blow that he was, once again, unemployed.

9 October 1829 – 3 December 1830: *WINCHESTER* (52), 1488 bm, crew of 450 men. Launched 21 June 1822, the ship was commissioned in 1829 to be the flagship of Admiral Sir Edward Griffith Colpoys, on his appointment to command the combined Halifax and Jamaica stations. Originally the vessel was one of the Java class of heavy 24 pounder frigates expressly designed to counter the threat of the heavy frigates used by the United States in the War of 1812. Colpoys nominated Charles to be his flag captain. The ship arrived on station, but Charles’s career was then cut short by an unfortunate accident when he ‘received considerable hurt in his Chest by a Fall from the Mast of his Ship in a Gale’ (*Family Record*, 264). He was obliged to return to England. Unrecorded is why this 51-year-old flag captain needed to climb a mast, and in a gale at that. After all, he did have 450 men to do it for him.

(The ship was a survivor: active in service until 1861 when she was renamed *Conway* and used at Liverpool as a training ship; renamed again *Mount Edgcombe* in 1876 for the Devon and Cornwall Training Ship Society; and finally sold 8 April 1921 at the age of 98.)

22 April 1838 – 5 June 1841: *BELLEROPHON* (80) 2056 bm, crew 650. Not the *Bellerophon* (74) of Trafalgar fame which in 1824 had become a prison hulk renamed *Captivity*. This new 80 gun ship had been originally named *Talavera* after Wellington’s victory in Spain of 1809, but the name was changed to *Waterloo* before launching on 16 Oct 1818 [*Sanditon*, chap. 4: ‘Waterloo is more the thing now’], and changed again in 1824 on the coming availability of the name *Bellerophon*. Few large two-deckers were produced by the British, the 98 gun three-decker being preferred, but *Bellerophon* was built to be the ultimate platform for massive firepower, mounting on her lower, upper, and quarter decks an intimidating seventy-two 32-pounder guns, and six 68-pounder carronades. In 1838 the Admiralty dispatched reinforcements to the Western Mediterranean

and among them was *Bellerophon* with Captain Charles Austen in command ¹⁴. Mehemet Ali, the Viceroy of Egypt, supported by France, had forcibly expanded his realm into Syria. Britain and the other European powers, allied with the Sultan in Constantinople, demanded that he withdraw. The Allied fleet rendezvoused at the mouth of the Dardanelles and then settled into the sheltered bay of Smyrna (Izmir) from October 1839 to June of 1840 to await the results of diplomacy. This, of course, was the very locale where Charles had suffered the loss of his ship *Phoenix* in a storm, twenty-four years before.

Mehemet Ali proved obdurate and hostilities began with the appearance before Beirut on 11 August 1840 of the combined fleets of Britain, Russia and Austria. A base was set up at Junieh. This triggered a general rising of the native population, particularly the Maronite Christians, against the Egyptian occupying forces led by Ibrahim, Mehemet Ali's son. *Bellerophon* was posted outside Beirut, in company with two other battleships, *Hastings* (74) and *Edinburgh* (74), and the town was bombarded on 11 September. On 28 September Sidon surrendered, and Beirut itself was taken on 3 October. The dominoes continued to fall with the evacuation of Tripoli on 22 October. This left just one remaining Egyptian stronghold: the fortress of St Jean d'Acre, reputedly impregnable. Everyone remembered Bonaparte's failed siege of Acre of 1799, the first setback in his career. The combined fleets arrived before Acre on 2 November, and at 2:00 in the afternoon of the next day an arc of a dozen battleships opened their broadsides at the town. The roar of cannon was tremendous and incessant. A hail of enemy missiles whistled in all directions over the fleet, while a tempest of shot and shell poured down on the batteries and citadel of the town. At 4:30 a large magazine in the town blew up with a terrific explosion and dense clouds of smoke. The debris rained down on *Bellerophon* which continued to fire, directing her 68-pounders on any source of resistance. At 6:00 all firing ceased. In the space of three and a half hours *Bellerophon* had consumed an incredible 160 barrels of gunpowder and 28 tons of cannon balls. She suffered no casualties. During the night the defenders submitted their surrender, and next day the town was occupied. *Bellerophon* was one of four vessels then given the task of transporting 2,000 of the prisoners to Beirut. This last Allied victory enabled peace to be negotiated, on 27 November at Alexandria, whereby Mehemet Ali was confirmed in his viceroyalty of Egypt, but Syria was to revert to the Porte.

This was a time for celebration, yet Charles and his ship were about to experience an imminent peril which would test his seamanship and character to the utmost. It was 1 December, and *Bellerophon* was riding peacefully at anchor off the town of Beirut. Overnight the wind freshened, and then became a gale, and at 5:30 next morning, in a violent squall of rain and wind, the ship's anchor dragged loose. A second anchor was deployed but fared no better, the ship perilously broaching sideways on to the waves. Charles took the only chance of keeping his ship off the shore, slipped loose his anchors and made sail. At 9:00 the seas were running high, a veritable hurricane was blowing, and there was no sign of a lull. By noon sails had split, were torn to ribbons, or had completely blown away. Enduring

a raging tempest of rain, hail and wind, the crew tried to lighten the ship and pitched overboard all the upper deck guns and shot, but towards sunset they were still dragging helplessly along the inhospitable shore. It seemed that everything possible had been done, and that the outlook was hopeless. Charles then called the ship's company aft and, during a pelting storm of rain, described their situation. He said that much depended on the coolness and conduct of the men, and on how they paid attention to his orders. With renewed vigour the crew set to work, made sail once again, and, aided by a fortuitous shift in wind direction, at last directed the ship away from the fatal shore. By 4:00 next morning the ship was safely ten miles from land and the crew could stand down, having been on deck in continuous action for 24 hours. *Bellerophon* had scraped the shore for 125 miles, from Beirut north to Latakia, for an extraordinary and very narrow escape. Commodore Sir Charles Napier gave great credit to Captain Austen and the officers and crew for saving the ship. It must have considerably added to Charles's anxieties that both his sons had been on board with him: Charles John junior, a nineteen-year-old master's mate; and fourteen-year-old Henry who, after this experience, decided that the life of a sailor was not for him, and joined the army.

Bellerophon was able to arrive at the fleet assembly point at Marmorice Bay (Marmaris) on 9 December and then sailed back to England, where she was paid off in June 1841. She continued to be employed at intervals, and took part in the bombardment of Sebastopol on 11 June 1854 during the Crimean War. She was finally sold on 12 January 1892.

Now Charles Austen was home again, and again unemployed. He had been awarded a good-service pension on 28 August 1840, which paid the recipient rather more than the customary half-pay, and he was made a Companion of the Bath on 18 December of that year in recognition of his services in the *Bellerophon*. He had the company of his family of wife, two sons and three daughters, but had to attend the funeral of his sister Cassandra in March 1845 at Chawton. Increasing seniority brought him promotion to Rear-Admiral on 9 November 1846.

14 January 1850 – 7 October 1852: Charles must have missed the active life at sea, for when he was offered the post of Commander-in-Chief of the East India and China station, he was pleased to accept.¹⁵ He travelled out to India by taking the P & O paddle steamer *Ripon* to Alexandria, going overland to Suez, and then taking ship to India. Once in India his command was based on Trincomalee, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the only deep water port on the east coast of the sub-continent. His flagship was the *HASTINGS* (74) which had campaigned with *Bellerophon* in Syria. He had arranged for Captain Francis Austen Junior, the son of his brother Frank, to be his flag captain. For a while the station was tranquil, but trouble broke out at the end of 1851 between British business interests in Rangoon (Yangon) and the Burmese authorities. The Viceroy of India, the Marquis of Dalhousie, issued an ultimatum on 15 March 1852, which was rejected by the Burmese King. This had been anticipated and military dispositions were ready. On 1 April Rear-Admiral Austen arrived from Singapore and Penang in HMS *RATTLER* (12) to join the assembled flotilla outside Rangoon. His new ship *Rattler* was a pioneering vessel – the wave

of the future – the first navy ship to be propelled by steam power driving a screw propeller. Mechanically more efficient than the side-paddle models, the vessel was less liable to be disabled in combat, and the gunnery was easier to arrange. *Rattler*'s armament was ten 32-pound carronades, and two long 68-pounders on swivels. The ship was of 888 bm, and had a crew of 180.

The campaign opened at daybreak on 5 April with a one hour naval bombardment of the native defences of the coastal town of Martaban. In the words of the military commander, General Henry Godwin: 'The Rear-Admiral made every disposition possible, in waters full of shoals and violent currents, for bombarding the position with his five steamers, and to cover the landing of the troops. It was the admiration of everyone to witness the noble way the *Rattler* worked her way to within 200 yards of the wall, and close to the pagoda, doing tremendous execution' (Baker, p.56). The troops then went ashore and by eight that morning the town was secured. Attention next turned to Rangoon. On 11 April Admiral Austen arrived off the town, and being fired upon, returned fire. The resulting powerful assault from his steam frigates ended in the general destruction of the whole line of enemy defences. Next day the infantry landed and, over 12 – 14 April, completed the occupation. Again General Godwin: 'I cannot presume to say of Rear-Admiral Austen, C.B., Commanding the Navy, more than to express my admiration for his qualities, and to thank him for his able and never-failing assistance' (Baker, p.71). On 30 April Viceroy Dalhousie and his Council officially added their thanks. But all was not entirely well. Cholera had broken out in the fleet and Charles was one of those affected. He withdrew to Calcutta for rest and recuperation; in fact *The Times* of 19 June reported that 'in consequence of bad health Admiral Austen is likely to come home immediately'. Some operations against the Burmese littoral had continued, with the capture of Bassein on 19 May, and Pegu on 3 June, but the arrival of the summer monsoon (June to September) effectively closed down military operations.

From 27 July to 1 August Dalhousie paid a flying visit to Rangoon for a council of war. It was decided to extend the British sphere of influence into the interior of the country by controlling the Irrawaddy as far as Prome, 200 miles up river. Admiral Austen, although his health was still in question, felt that his duty required him to resume active service, and he therefore returned to Rangoon in early September in *Hastings*, towed in by *Rattler*. For the journey upstream he transferred to the *PLUTO*, a wooden paddle-steamer gunship of 365 bm. On 23 September he arrived at the island of Shouk-shay-khune, ten miles south of Prome, where the British forces were based, to reconnoitre and plan the assault. Fatally, on 5 October his health at last gave way, paying the penalty for his age, the climate, his exertions, and his illness. He died two days later, on the 7th, still on board the *Pluto*.¹⁶ The ship headed downstream for Rangoon with the Admiral's body on the 8th, and on the 12th moved on to Bassein to meet the *Rattler*, which had been ordered to proceed back to Trincomalee with his remains. Charles was buried at Trincomalee in the Naval Cemetery on Sober Island (JAS *Collected Reports* 1976-1985, pp. 261-62).

The Times took advantage of these events to chastise government: ‘The death ... has not caused much surprise here. The result shows the impolicy of sending flag officers of advanced years and nearly expended energies upon such stations as the East Indies and China. Rear-Admiral Austen makes the third of his rank in succession who have died in the chief command on the East India and China station’ (30 November 1852); and, a few days later: ‘how much better would the *Rattler* have been employed in bearing our victorious troops to the storm of Ava than in carrying a lifeless corpse over a thousand miles of ocean’ (3 December 1852) Laurie, in his history of the war (*Pegu*, pp 84-5), calls this eruption of editorial wrath astonishing, and of questionable taste.

The final word may go to the Marquis of Dalhousie, Viceroy and Governor-General of India: ‘feeling it to be due to the memory of an old and gallant sailor that he should add a public expression of the deep regret with which he has received intimation of his death ... Although Admiral Austen did not survive to witness the successful conclusion of the operations in which he had shared, the Governor-General in Council desires to record his admiration of the staunch high spirit, which, notwithstanding his age and previous suffering, had led the Rear-Admiral to take his part in the trying service which has closed his career’ (*The Times*, 2 December 1852).

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Notes

- 1 While *Endymion* was being made ready for sea, Sir Thomas was a member

of the jury at the court-martial of Richard Parker, the ringleader of the Nore mutiny, from 22 to 26 June, on board *Neptune* (98).

- 2 The dates of Charles Austen's appointments to his various ships, from *Scorpion* to *Bellerophon*, are supplied by Charles himself, in a document submitted to the Admiralty on 5 October 1843 (PRO, ADM 196/3/298). Charles's brother Frank's individual service dates can be found at ADM196/68/145 (see Caplan, 2008).
- 3 Paget then wasted no time after getting into port, and within two weeks was a married man. He entered Parliament, but continued his naval career, was knighted in 1819 and became a rear admiral in 1823. *Endymion* also continued active for many years, playing a major part in taking the USS *President* in 1815, and later sailing in the West and East Indies. The ship was finally broken up in 1868 after an active life of 71 years.
- 4 Thomas Fowle, son of a former pupil of the Revd George Austen at Steventon, in 1808 was for a time a midshipman on *Indian*. Later, on 2 August 1812, when a midshipman on *Horatio* (38) off the coast of Norway he was severely wounded while taking part in a cutting-out expedition. He died a lieutenant in 1821 (*Sailor Brothers*, 210).
- 5 The invaluable catalogue of Charles Austen's prizes in *Indian* has been researched and published for the first time in 'Charles Austen: Prize Chaser and Prize Taker on the North American Station, 1805-1808', by Sheila Johnson Kindred, *Persuasions*, 26 (2004), pp. 188-194.
- 6 One may wonder what errant breeze could have blown a vessel from Sweden into the Caribbean. In fact Sweden had purchased the Caribbean island of Saint-Barthelemy (St Barts) from France in 1784. It was sold back in 1878.
- 7 For example, between August 1806 and March 1810 the brig *Columbine* (18), from a total number of men on the books of 322, lost 101 men to desertion, for an annual leakage of 23% of her crew. Charles Austen's companion ship *Vesta* (4), between April 1807 and April 1812, from a cumulative roster of 176 men, had no fewer than 63 desert, for an annual loss of a staggering 36%. (*Desertion, identity, and the North American Squadron 1784-1812*, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic). The problem was squadron wide; the captains must have thought of little else.
- 8 Tom Bertram's remark to Dr Grant in chapter 12 of *Mansfield Park*: 'A strange business this in America', could very well be explained by Jefferson's very strange Embargo Act. A reference to the Act would support the years 1808-9 in the controversy over the chronology employed by Jane Austen in writing *Mansfield Park* (Caplan, 2006).
- 9 Sheila Kindred, 'Charles Austen's capture of the French privateer La Jeune Estelle', *Jane Austen Society Report* for 2006, pp. 50-53.
- 10 Sheila Kindred in *Jane Austen and the North Atlantic* (JAS, 2006) p.13, quotes the contemporary press. General biographical sources, quoted in Wikipedia, have it that 'during the chase of a small French ship near Bermuda Conn became overeager, slipped and fell overboard'. These explanations seem

rather contrived compared to the version that Conn ‘jumped overboard in a fit of temporary derangement’ (bermuda-online.org/history 1800-1899, and ageofnelson.org/forum/viewtopic). The speculation is that he was depressed about his only son Henry, who had been a midshipman with his father on *Swiftsure* a few months before. After gaining promotion to lieutenant the lad had transferred to the frigate *Junon* (40) but this had been taken by the French on 13 December 1809 (Caplan, 2007, p.41) and Henry was now a prisoner in France.

- 11 *Phoenix* was one of a small class of four 18-pounder frigates. One sister ship was *Perseverance*, his brother Frank’s first ship on going to sea; another was *Inconstant*, which had narrowly survived shipwreck while transporting brother Henry and his Oxford Militia to Ireland in 1799 (Caplan, Clive, Jane Austen’s Soldier Brother, *Persuasions*, 18 (1996), pp. 122-43.
- 12 Padstow, on the rocky north coast of Cornwall, is open to the heavy Atlantic surf. The town features a treacherous sandbank, the appropriately named Doom Bar, which lies across the mouth of the estuary of the river Camel and is responsible for many a shipwreck. Contraband tea, tobacco, gin, rum and brandy were landed in the district, mainly in the less stormy summer months.
- 13 Trustees of the National Library of Scotland, MS.5676, f.87. This reference was generously supplied by Deirdre Le Faye. Rejected as an invention must be the delightful story laid out by George Holbert Tucker in his *A Goodly Heritage* (1983) and by Brian Southam in *Jane Austen and the Navy* (2000) that Charles was living at Gosport and that on learning of Maxwell’s death he rushed to the Admiralty to offer himself as a replacement. See ‘A Bogus Tale: Ellman, Charles Austen and the Aurora’ in the current *Report*, p. 11-13.
- 14 Information on *Bellerophon* in Syria from: *Narrative of the Late Expedition to Syria*, W. P. Hunter, 2 vols, (1842); *The War in Syria*, Sir Charles Napier, 2 vols (1842); and ‘Bellerophon at Acre’, in *Fraser’s Magazine*, XX111 (for Jan.-June 1841), pp. 625-27.
- 15 Information on Rear-Admiral Charles Austen and the Second Anglo-Burmese War from: *Pegu, Being a Narrative of Events During the Second Burmese War*, William Laurie (1854); and *The Recent Operations of the British Forces at Rangoon and Martaban*, Revd Thomas Baker (1852). Baker was chaplain of HMS *Fox* (40) at the beginning of the campaign, and himself died of cholera on 16 April 1852.
- 16 Prome fell to British forces on 8/9 October, with the loss of only one man killed. This essentially ended the Second Anglo-Burmese War.

A Scrap to Treasure

Chris Viveash



Lady Stepney

‘A considerable collection of manuscripts by or relating to Jane Austen, hitherto preserved in a branch of the family, has recently been dispersed. As the interest, and even the authenticity, of some of these manuscripts depends in a greater or less degree upon their pedigree, it seems right that the collection should be adequately described before it is too late.’¹ In these words R. W. Chapman, in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 14 January 1926, describes a list of 24 items, the majority of which have been amply discussed in the intervening eighty-three years. The exception to this catalogue of manuscript items is 19(C), which we will now consider.

Pinned to a scrap of a letter (to Cassandra Austen?) is the well-documented quotation from Richard Brinsley Sheridan speaking to Miss Shirreff on *Pride and Prejudice* and exhorting her to buy it: ‘... for it was one of the cleverest things he ever read.’² The scrap attached to this, and quite unrecorded, ought really to be included in the knowledge we have of the Austen family’s intense pride in Jane. Henry Austen has written to Cassandra in a state of excitement concerning a review in *The Standard* (a Whig newspaper, in opposition to the Tory *Times*) concerning a new book by Lady Stepney. The reviewer of this novel has stated that the work is comparable with Jane Austen’s best endeavours.

The authoress, Lady Stepney, was the personification of an eccentric lady author, and frequently ridiculed by contemporary writers. Let us, therefore,

THE
HEIR PRESUMPTIVE.

BY
LADY STEPNEY

IN THREE VOLUMES



VOL. I.

LONDON :
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1835.

discover a little more about her, before Henry Austen's quotation can be completed. Born in 1778, Catherine Pollok was the daughter of Dr Thomas Pollok, rector of Grittleton in Wiltshire. He served his parish diligently for thirty-eight years.



Bust of Lady Stepney

The young Catherine married a dashing young blade named Russell Manners, and by him she had one son. During her marriage to Manners, and under her married name, she published two Gothic novels, *Castle Nuovier* and *The Lords of Erith*. Her husband then abruptly deserted her: his womanising ways took him off to Prince Edward Island in Canada, to Catherine's fury. He eventually decided to return to Britain, and settled in Edinburgh. Catherine Manners got wind of this and, moving rapidly north, she successfully tracked him down. She then sued him for divorce, citing desertion and adultery. (Divorcing was not a course of action a woman of her station could pursue in England, unless her husband brought his mistress into the home.)³ Successful in her case Catherine was then free to marry Sir Thomas Stepney in Edinburgh, on 8 June, this being accomplished in the same year as her divorce, 1813. He was quite a catch, as he was a Groom of the Bed-Chamber to the Duke of York, a prince of doubtful morals and questionable honesty. Known as an 'epicurean Croesus', Sir Thomas decided that the gentlemen's clubs of London offered the most insufferable food imaginable. With advice from the Prince Regent's chef, Watier, and Labourie, a royal cook, Sir Thomas Stepney established a new dining club. Its splendid premises at 81

Piccadilly ensured that Watier's became a magnet for the London beau monde led by those effete dandies Beau Brummell and Thomas Raikes. Exquisite food served in luxurious surroundings, proved a total success during its short history.⁴

In 1825 Sir Thomas died, leaving Catherine, Lady Stepney with limited means to support herself. A great sale of treasures, including a Rubens oil painting on panel, was held by Catherine in 1830. Two years later she returned to novel writing; *The New Road to Ruin* was published in 1833, and was of the 'silver fork' genre. A word picture of Lady Stepney at this time is given by Harriet Martineau in her autobiography: 'I was then boarded by Lady Stepney who was then, as she boasted, receiving seven hundred pounds apiece for her novels. She paraded a pair of diamond earrings, costing that sum, which she had so earned ... She shook her head-dress of marabou [sic] feathers and black bugles with her excitement as she talked.'⁵

More serious, however, was the accusation after her novel *The Heir Presumptive* was published, made by Mrs Barbara Hofland, the celebrated children's writer. Writing to Mary Russell Mitford, Mrs Hotland fumed: 'I find Miss Landon wrote Lady Stepney's book ... She [Miss Landon] had a hundred pounds and grumbles much, as she says it took her more time than writing a new one would have done.' Mary Russell Mitford went further, in a letter of 1838 to Elizabeth Barrett, when she wrote: 'The things that go under Lady Stepney's title were all written over by Miss Landon, or the grammar and spelling would have disgraced a lady's maid. This is a want of self-respect which one can not pardon: and, coupled with other facts of a similar nature, they explain my distaste towards her as a sister authoress.'⁶ Miss Landon was Letitia Elizabeth Landon, who attended Miss Rowden's school in Hans Place, in London. (She returned there, in 1826, following the death of her nearest relative.) She was a noted poetess and attended literary salons. She married in 1838 and died mysteriously as a result of drinking prussic acid that very year; it appeared to be suicide, but her new husband and the woman who found the body, a Mrs Bailey, both prevaricated and altered their stories when challenged.

Meanwhile Lady Stepney published two more silver-fork novels, *The Courtier's Daughter* and *The Three Peers*. This last novel concerned a heroine with the wildly improbable name of Gwelderline. However, *The Times* gushed: 'We were certainly prepared, on sitting down to peruse this new novel of Lady Stepney, to enjoy something *récherché* [sic]; and in candour we must allow that our expectations have not, on the whole, been disappointed.'⁷

There we must leave Gwelderline to return to Henry Austen's comment to his sister, Cassandra, in the period following the publication of Lady Stepney's *The Heir Presumptive*, published by Richard Bentley, in 1835. Henry has written out from *The Standard* of 14 February 'a mention of Lady Stepney's *The Heir Presumptive* as having the quiet grace and delicacy of painting which are so attractive in the pages of Miss Austen.' Jane would naturally have taken great pleasure in seeing her name in print, but not in comparison with a writer of Lady Stepney's increasing notoriety within bluestocking circles.

Lady Stepney continued to hold stylish salons at her Cavendish Square address until her death, in April 1845. She attempted to bring the great names of literature into her circle, using her friendships with Jane Porter, Sydney, Lady Morgan and J. G. Lockhart (Scott's son-in-law) as bait. In retrospect, she was a harmless exotic old bird of rather vivid plumage, but her contemporaries regarded Lady Stepney as a very strident, unwanted cuckoo within the literary nest.

Notes

- 1 Gilson, David, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* (Winchester, 1997), p. 541.
- 2 Ibid., p. 26.
- 3 Fullerton, Susannah, *Jane Austen and Crime* (Madison, 2006), p. 67.
- 4 Street, G. S., *The Ghosts of Piccadilly* (London, 1907), pp. 42-45.
- 5 Martineau, Harriet, *Autobiography* (London, 1877), Vol. 1, pp. 371-372.
- 6 L'Estrange, Rev. A. G. K., ed., *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford* (New York, 1870), Vol. 2, pp. 210-211.
- 7 *The Times*, 11 December 1840

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Notes on sales 2009

Christine Penney

First and early editions

The outstanding sale of 2009 took place in New York on 6 May, when Bloomsbury Auctions sold the library of Paula Peyraud (1947-2008). The catalogue, entitled *Samuel Johnson and women writers in Georgian society*, comprised 480 lots, 85% of which were sold, realising \$1.6 million. Paula Peyraud, described in an article on the sale in *The Daily Telegraph* on 28 April as 'the quiet librarian from Chappaqua, started buying in the early 1970s and built a library at her parents' house to store her purchases, said to be the largest privately owned collection of books, manuscripts and pictures associated with Dr Johnson and the 18th-century 'Blue Stocking' circle. Her preference was for books that had been used and annotated and she also collected paintings and watercolours. The meticulous habits of a true librarian ensured that she recorded full details of price and source for every purchase. She began to collect Jane Austen in 1973 and her collection included copies of all five first editions of the novels.

Sense and Sensibility

Lot 128 in the Paula Peyraud sale on 6 May was a copy of the first edition, 1811 (Gilson A1). Bound in contemporary tan half calf over marbled boards, spines ruled, titled and ornamented in gilt, with the half-titles, it had been sold previously at Christies on 12 February 1963 (Lot 6) to Pickering and Chatto for £300. A former owner was Major David Gordon. The estimate was \$25,000-\$35,000 and it sold for \$38,000. Another copy was on abebooks with St Mary's Books and Prints, Stamford. Lacking half-titles but with the final blanks it was rebound

rather tightly in modern tan morocco by Zaehnsdorf. The title page to Vol. I had a previous owner's inscription, 'Miss Austin', next to the printed line 'By A Lady'. Vol. III had a neat previous owner's inscription to the top right of the title page, 'Maria Lea'. Described as 'a stunning copy', it was offered for £25,000.

Lot 406 at Dominic Winter on 4 March was a copy of the Bentley edition, 1833 (Gilson D1), offered with *Mansfield Park*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* from the same edition of the Standard Novels. They were all bound in near contemporary green half calf with marbled boards. The Lot was estimated at £1,000-£1,500 and sold for £1,550. Another copy was Lot 486 in the Dominic Winter sale on 23 September. The engraved frontispiece and additional vignette titlepage were coloured but it lacked both boards. The estimate was £100-£150; it sold for £140. St Mary's Books and Prints had a copy on abebooks for £750, half bound in leather, with marbled boards and with evidence of a previous sticker (whatever that may mean) to the front free endpaper. It was described as 'a lovely volume, ideal for the collector or as a gift' but as it is described only as 'the first illustrated edition' it is not possible to determine whether this is Gilson D1 or part of Gilson D6.

Pride and Prejudice

A copy of the first edition, 1813 (Gilson A3) was Lot 129 in the sale of the Paula Peyraud collection, mentioned above. Lacking the half-titles it was bound in contemporary dark green half calf over green marbled boards, spines gilt ruled and decorated in five panels with red morocco lettering pieces. Signature F3 in Vol. III was misbound after F9. It bore the bookplate of the Earl of Carysfort. The estimate was \$20,000-\$30,000 and it sold for \$26,000.

James Burmester had a copy of the second edition, 1813 (Gilson A4) as Item 70 in his Catalogue 75. It lacked the half-titles and was rebound in contemporary-style dark green half morocco. Parts of Vol. III were quite heavily foxed. The price was £5,000.

A copy of the third edition, 1817 (Gilson A5) was Lot 439 at Key's Fine Art Auctioneers, Aylsham, on 29 October. It lacked the half-titles and was bound in old calf. The estimate was £400-£500 and it sold for £1,350. Peter Harrington had another copy on abebooks, with the bookplates of S. Lushington on the front pastedowns and the initials 's.g.l.' on the flyleaves. Stephen Rumbold Lushington (1776-1868), MP successively for Rye and Canterbury, is mentioned with approval in several of Jane Austen's letters, which he kindly franked for her. This copy may have belonged to another member of his family. There was an embossed bookseller's ticket on the flyleaf of Vol. II. Half-titles were not mentioned and the binding was contemporary tan half calf with marbled boards. The price was a very high one, £5,000. An even more expensive copy was offered by Clarel Rare Books of Los Angeles, also on abebooks and priced at \$24,750 (with a modest £5.65 for shipping to the UK – one might have thought they could have included the postage at that price). The binding, however, was the original blue paper covered boards with brown paper spines and pink spine labels, faded to buff, and both half-titles, together with endpapers and terminal blanks were present. David

Gilson notes only two other copies of this edition in original boards, so perhaps the price is justified.

A copy of the Bentley edition, 1833 (Gilson D5) was offered as part of Lot 406 at the Dominic Winter sale on 4 March, mentioned above. He offered another copy, inaccurately described as part of the collected edition (Gilson D6), at Lot 487 in his sale on 23 September. The series title had been torn out and it was bound in the original cloth. The estimate was £150-£200 and it sold for £340. Another copy was on abebooks with Jonkers Rare Books, for £2,500. This was in the original plum coloured cloth with black title labels.

A copy of the 1894 George Allen edition (Gilson E78) signed by the illustrator, Hugh Thomson, was Lot 109 at Tewkesbury Auctions on 8 October. The estimate was £50-£100 and it sold for £310.

Mansfield Park

Lot 130 in the Paula Peyraud sale mentioned above was a copy of the first edition, 1814 (Gilson A6). Bound in contemporary speckled calf, spine with gilt rules and red and black morocco lettering pieces, but with Vol. I rebounded and the upper board of Vol. II detached, it lacked the half-titles. Its provenance was the Duke of Portland, bearing his cipher, gilt-stamped on upper and lower boards, and his bookplates and crest. The estimate was \$7,000-\$10,000. It sold for \$7,500. Another copy was Item 3 in C. R. Johnson's Catalogue 52. It lacked the half-titles, the final blank in Vol. II and the final advertisement leaf in Vol. III. The binding was contemporary calf and the price £9,500. Another copy, for the same price, was Item 71 in Burmester's Catalogue 75. It also lacked the half-titles, the final blank in Vol. II and the advertisement leaf in Vol. III. It was bound in contemporary half calf with red and black morocco labels.

A copy of the Bentley edition, 1833 (Gilson D3) was part of Lot 405 at the Dominic Winter sale on 4 March, mentioned above. Charlie Byrne's Bookshop, Galway, had a copy on abebooks for £461, in the original cloth. A previous owner's name (unidentified) was on the front free endpaper, followed, on the succeeding blank, by a pencil sketch of an old man seated before a large pot suspended over a fire. This seems to have no relevance to any episode in the novel. The bookseller's label of P. Cleary, Dublin was on the front pastedown. Joe McKernan (Frederiksberg, Denmark) had a copy on abebooks for £600. It was bound in the original cloth but described as 'internally generally clean, externally poor' with bubbling on the covers and the spine damaged. The 4-page publisher's catalogue of the Standard Novels was at the end.

Emma

A copy of the first edition, 1816 (Gilson A8) was Lot 131 in the Paula Peyraud sale mentioned above. It lacked the half-titles and was bound in mid 19th-century calf, spine gilt in five compartments, with gilt-ruled covers and red and blue morocco lettering pieces. A former owner was the Prime Minister Herbert Asquith. It had been presented to him in 1918 by Lord Crewe, with an inscription

on the front free endpaper and the Crewe Hall bookplates on the pastedowns. The estimate was \$8,000-\$12,000 and it sold for \$9,500. Another copy was Item 93 in Burmester's Catalogue 76. Vol. I lacked its half-title and the ownership inscription on the dedication leaf was cropped. The binding was contemporary-style dark maroon half morocco with marbled boards. The price was £11,500. The same copy, with identical description and price, appeared in C. R. Johnson's Catalogue 52 at Item 2, and what sounds very like the same copy was also Item 29 in Pickering and Chatto's Catalogue 29. Another copy was Item 2 in Quaritch's Autumn 2009 catalogue of English books, priced at £25,000. This had all the half-titles and was curiously described as being bound in contemporary marbled calf with black morocco labels. Presumably the cataloguer intended to record half or quarter calf with marbled boards.

Peter Stern (Boston, MA) had a copy on abebooks for \$32,500, bound in contemporary green quarter-morocco with mottled paper boards, rebacked with the original spines laid down, and held in a half-morocco clamshell box. This word has occurred before in descriptions by American dealers and possibly means a solander case. A contemporary and unidentified owner's signatures were on the first blank of each vol. Half-titles were present in Vols. II and III only. Charles Parkhurst Rare Books (Scottsdale AZ) had a copy on abebooks for \$18,500. It lacked the half-titles and was bound in period style $\frac{3}{4}$ polished calf over marbled boards. Gibb's Bookshop, Manchester, had Vols. I and II only of this edition on abebooks, in the original blue paper backed boards with cream paper spines and with both half-titles, for £10,000. Dragon Books (Los Angeles) had a copy, also on abebooks, bound in full contemporary tan calf, rebacked at a later date, lacking the half-titles in Vols. II and III. The price was \$30,000. St Mary's Books and Prints had a copy on abebooks with all half-titles, bound in brown half calf, for £18,000.

A copy of the Bentley edition, 1833 (Gilson D2) was part of Lot 406 at the Dominic Winter sale on 4 March, mentioned above. Peter Harrington had a copy on abebooks for £1,500, bound in later brown quarter morocco with tan cloth sides. The ownership inscription 'Geo. Atkins, 7 Thurloe Square SW' was on the titlepage.

Northanger Abbey and Persuasion

Lyon and Turnbull offered, at Lot 217A in their sale on 4 February, a copy of the first edition, 1818 (Gilson A9). It was bound in contemporary half calf without half-titles and was estimated at £3,000-£4,000. It sold for £3,800. Lot 132 in the Paula Peyraud sale mentioned above was another copy. It lacked the half-titles and was bound in contemporary half calf, rebacked, over marbled boards. The pastedowns bore the ownership signature of Charles Gordon, Wiscombe. (Wiscombe is in East Devon.) Estimated at \$5,000-\$8,000 it sold for \$5,500. Bernard J Shapero had a copy on abebooks for \$9,849. All half-titles were present, together with the two final blanks in Vol. IV. It was bound in near contemporary half green morocco over plain grey boards. Each pastedown bore an unidentified

bookplate. Barter Books (Alnwick) had a copy on abebooks for £8,505, in a contemporary binding of half leather with marbled boards and in a slip case. It lacked the half-titles but had the two final blanks. Another copy on abebooks was with Holybourne Rare Books, for £6,500. This was bound by Bayntun in half calf with black and red labels.

Clarel Rare Books had a copy of the first American edition of *Northanger Abbey*, 1833 (Gilson B5) on abebooks for \$13,250. It was in the original muslin-backed paper-covered boards, with a contemporary ink and pencil ownership name and owner's inscription on the titlepage of Vol. I and additionally on several pages scattered through the text. It had the preliminary advertisement leaf in Vol. I and the biographical notice of the author and all preliminary and terminal blanks called for in Gilson. According to his bibliography (page 118) the last copy of this edition to appear at auction was at Sotheby's on 17 June 1915 (Lot 8) when it 'sold for the extraordinary sum of one shilling'.

Collected editions

Bearnes, Hampton and Littlewood (Exeter) offered a set of what may have been the first collected Bentley edition, 1833 (Gilson D6) in their sale on 18 March (Lot 64). The sparse description read: 'Austen (Jane), Works, III, publ. Richard Bentley 1833, 5 vols., 8vo., hf. Cf. (some covers detached)'. The estimate was £800-£1,200 and it sold for £1,250.

Another set was Lot 187 at Bloomsbury Book Auctions on 23 April, in contemporary calf, rebaked and repaired and with a contemporary bookplate. The estimate was £1,800- £2,000. It failed to sell.

Other material

The Paula Peyraud sale mentioned above included some letters from Maria Edgeworth. One, dated 20 April 1826 to Mrs Griffith (Lot 255), referred to Jane Austen. Commenting on Sir Walter Scott's latest publication (*Lives of the Novelists*, 1825) she writes that the reason he did not mention Jane Austen in it was 'not because he undervalued her talents – of that he is incapable – but simply because the work was continued only to the time of Cumberland'. The estimate for this letter was \$500-\$800, well exceeded by the hammer price of \$2,400. It had been sold previously at the Peter Croft sale at Sotheby's in December 1985 for £320.

Dominic Winter offered, at Lot 289 on 10 December, eight of the original 24 pen and ink and watercolour drawings for the Dent edition of *Mansfield Park* (Gilson E124) by Charles Edmund Brock. They comprised the titlepage and seven illustrations: 'The kind pains you took to persuade me out of my fears', 'Indulged with his favourite instrument', 'While Fanny cut the roses', 'He walked to the gate and stood there without seeming to know what to do', 'A ranting young man who appeared likely to knock him down backwards', 'Good, gentle Fanny' and 'The joyful consent which met Edmund's application'. All but the titlepage were signed and dated 1908. They were tipped in to card folders and accompanied

by the publisher's file copy of the novel in its original gilt decorated cloth. The estimate was £3,000-£5,000 and they sold for £6,400. My 1998 report records several other incomplete sets of Brock drawings, including 12 for *Mansfield Park*, from the archives of J.M Dent and Co., at two Sotheby's sales on 7 May and 11 November. All of them then failed to sell.

Burmester's Catalogue 76 offered a copy of the first edition of Bidpal's *Kalila and Dimna*, 1819, translated from the Arabic by the Revd Wyndham Knatchbull, whom Jane Austen mentions in her letter to Cassandra dated 8 March 1814 as a possible suitor for Fanny (no. 98 in Deirdre Le Faye's edition of the Letters). It was bound in contemporary straight-grained olive morocco and was priced at £65. Item 110 in the same catalogue was a copy of the first edition of Jane West's *A gossip's story*, 1796, suggested by Joyce Tompkins in 1940 as the principal source for *Sense and Sensibility*. (See her article '*Elinor and Marianne: a note on Jane Austen*' in *Review of English Studies*, 16.) It was bound in contemporary speckled calf and priced at £950.

Lot 338 at the Cotswold Auction Company (Cheltenham) sale on 4 August was a copy of the 32nd edition of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress from this World ... complete in two parts*, 1765. This book and two others in the Lot (unidentified, though it is just possible to make out from the photograph on the website that one is the *Whole works* of Robert Leighton) bore the signatures of Edward Knight, described by the auctioneer as Jane Austen's brother; but as the signatures are dated 1867 and 1850 they are more likely to be those of his son, Edward senior having died in 1852. These books, the entry says, came from the family of Mr Edward Knight. The Lot, estimated at £50-£100, sold for £150. Mrs Hartz's copy of William Turner's *History of all religions in the world*, 1695 (Gilson K8), previously noted in my reports for 1999 and 2002, appeared at the greatly reduced price of £650 in Ian Hodgkins's Catalogue 128 (item 185). Another reappearance was the Bath edition of the *Trial of Jane Leigh Perrot* [1800?] (Gilson L1), previously offered in 2002 by C. R. Johnson for £8,500. It was now Item 2 in Pickering and Chatto's Catalogue 785, for £7,500. The Taunton edition of the same work (Gilson L2), offered by C. R. Johnson in 2003 for £6,500, was Item 1 in the same catalogue, priced at £5,000. A lengthy note quoted John Halperin's opinion that Mrs Leigh Perrot was the model for Mrs Norris in *Mansfield Park*. Yet another copy of the Taunton edition was Item 73 in Burmester's Catalogue 75, priced at £3,000.

Lot 393 at the Dominic Winter sale on 8 April was a copy of *A Collection of Twelve Glees, for Three, Four and Five Voices also are added a Cannon & Three Rounds for Three and Four Voices, Likewise Two Duets, Composed & Dedicated by Permission to the Most Noble the Duke of Buckingham & Chandos, and her Grace, the Duchess of Buckingham & Chandos*, c. 1811. It was in the original printed boards, rebacked. This compilation was by George Chard, the organist at Winchester Cathedral, who was also known as Jane Austen's music teacher. It was estimated at £150-£200 and sold for £380.

Lot 293 at the Bloomsbury Book Auction sale on 23 April was a collection

of documents and letters of the Farnaby family of Wickham Court, Kent. These included a copy of the will of Sir Charles Farnaby Bart., mentioning John Farnaby Cator, Captain Royal Artillery, and the Revd John Thomas Austen, rector of West Wickham and a relative of Jane Austen. The date was assigned to the 1850s. The estimate for the collection was £100-£150. It sold for £500.

A portrait miniature of Jane Austen's sister-in-law Elizabeth was Lot 127 in the Paula Peyraud sale mentioned above. The sitter is inaccurately and infelicitously described as Elizabeth Bridges Knight, an appellation which did not apply in life. Her maiden name was indeed Bridges, but she died in 1808, four years before her husband Edward changed the family surname to Knight; and she was not known as Elizabeth Bridges Austen either. The miniature, by Thomas Hazlehurst (1740-1821), was an oval watercolour on ivory, showing the subject wearing a white dress with a blue ribbon tied under her corsage. It was initialled T.H on the lower left and was offered with an uncoloured print of Godmersham Park by Watts. *Country Life*, 27 July 1987, carried an illustration of the miniature on page 111. The estimate was \$2,000-\$3,000 but it failed to sell. Perhaps we should attempt to get it for Chawton.

Our subscription to *Invaluable*, which is responsible for most of the items in this section, also picked up an English small sword with a cut steel hilt made by Thomas Gray of Sackville Street, London in the late 18th century. This was Lot 216 in the Thomas Del Mar sale on 9 December. The catalogue description reminded us that Gray's shop is mentioned in Vol. 2, Chapter 11 of *Sense and Sensibility* when Elinor and Marianne visit it to negotiate an exchange for some of their mother's old-fashioned jewels. The hilt was possibly made by Matthew Boulton. The estimate was £500-£700 and it sold for £950.

‘Regulated Hatred’

Matthew Parris

‘The impression of Jane Austen that has filtered through’ – and I quote – ‘to the reading public, down from the first-hand critics, through histories of literature, university courses, literary journalism and polite allusion, deters many who might be her best readers from bothering with her at all.’¹

The paper from which I am reading was first published in *Scrutiny* magazine in 1940, and republished 59 years later. The author was the now long-gone D.W. Harding. Harding started as a Cambridge student of the great though rather wholesale and eccentric literary critic F.R. Leavis – he of ‘words-on-the-page’ fame. Harding got a First in English, then switched to Psychology – and got a First in that too. He was an early student of T.S. Eliot’s work, and an eager and life-long reader of Jane Austen’s. His studies of her writing changed the course of literary criticism of the great novelist.

But I was quoting from him. He has, as you recall, just suggested that the popular impression of what Jane Austen was all about has deterred many from reading her who might otherwise appreciate her. How can that popular impression be described? Again, I quote:

In my experience the first idea to be absorbed from the atmosphere surrounding her work was that she offered exceptionally favourable openings to the exponents of urbanity. Gentlemen of an older generation than mine spoke of their intention of re-reading her on their deathbeds; Eric Linklater’s cultured Prime Minister in *The Impregnable Women* passes from surreptitious to abandoned reading of her novels as a national crisis deepens. With this there also came the impression that she provided a refuge for the sensitive when the contemporary world grew too much for them. So Beatrice Kean Seymour writes (*Jane Austen*): ‘In a society which has enthroned the machine-gun and carried it aloft even into the quiet heavens, there will always be men and women – Escapist or not, as you please – who will turn to her novels with an unending sense of relief and thankfulness.’²

I [Harding continues] was given to understand that her scope was of course extremely restricted, but that within her limits she succeeded admirably in expressing the gentler virtues of a civilized social order. ... Chiefly, so I gathered, she was a delicate satirist, revealing with inimitable lightness of touch the comic foibles and amiable weaknesses of the people whom she lived amongst and liked.

I don’t think that is a bad description of the way in which, seventy years later than when Harding wrote, Jane Austen is still viewed by most – including, some

of the time, most of us. Including especially (I would add – for this was a medium of which Harding could know little when he wrote) those who come to her work through television or cinema costume drama, or in staged versions – much of it excellent entertainment, some of it sensitively done, and some of it even adding (I would argue) to our ability to picture in the most visual sense the world of which she wrote. But to return, now, to Harding.

All this [he wrote] was enough to make me quite certain I didn't want to read her. And it is, I believe, a seriously misleading impression. Fragments of the truth have been incorporated in it but they are fitted into a pattern whose total effect is false. And yet the wide currency of this false impression is an indication of Jane Austen's success in an essential part of her complex intention as a writer: her books are, as she meant them to be, read and enjoyed by precisely the sort of people whom she disliked; she is a literary classic of the society which attitudes like hers, held widely enough, would undermine.³

I shall in a moment challenge that remark. But you can, can't you, see what Harding is trying to say. His paper was entitled 'Regulated Hatred', and his thesis is that beneath Jane Austen's work, and outlook, and voice, passes a very strong current of dislike – bordering on detestation – of the kind of people she was writing about and the kind of society in which she lived and worked, and for which she wrote. His suggestion is that Jane Austen is a subversive writer, and that 'sarcasm' would not be too strong a word to describe the slant of her commentary. 'For what,' she once wrote, 'do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?'⁴ Harding here chooses a different quotation, from *Northanger Abbey*, when Henry Tilney offers a solemn reprimand of Catherine's fantastic suspicions about his father.⁵

But that Harding's readers might have thought him too obvious, I'd suggest he could equally have chosen the most famous Jane Austen quotation of all: 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.' Forgive my repeating it; you all know it by heart. It is indeed a truth universally acknowledged that a columnist in possession of a serviceable column but short of an arresting line with which to draw his readers in, must be in want of Chapter 1, line 1 of *Pride and Prejudice*. I wonder whether, as Jane Austen sat at her desk writing those words, she could have had the least idea that they would conquer the world – 47,000 references on Google alone, when I tried.

But the point about that sentence is that it is obviously sarcastic. Gently sarcastic, mellowly sarcastic but still, you know, in its secret heart, pretty sharp; and a little sour. Get possessions, sonny; get money; then get yourself a wife. In that order of priority. If I were a feminist I would have no difficulty in reading into that line a bitter little shout of female indignation.

And it is here that I shall take issue with D.W. Harding. Because I think the satire, the indignation, the *intolerance* that threads its way through the sweetness

of Jane Austen's writing is not, and never was, lost on her readers and admirers. It's obvious! The astringency – the sudden, unexpected, sharp little jolt we feel when we encounter, as we regularly do, a small, half-concealed and beautifully formed acid drop embedded in her narrative – is part of the thrill of Jane Austen.

We're not stupid. We don't for a moment, and never did, take Jane Austen to be a sort of period Barbara Cartland with literary knobs on. We love the elegance, we love the occasional lushness, but beneath it we do sniff the desert air, and – perhaps only subliminally, perhaps only half acknowledged – detect the elegant, occasional, but unmistakable *spite*. Which of us, in *Pride and Prejudice*, has not winced at the author's treatment of poor Mrs Bennet? Which of us has not reflected that the reader likes and forgives Mrs Bennet a little more than her own creator, Jane Austen, does? Which of us has not thought *Mr* Bennet's sport at his wife's stupidity a little cruel – even a little cowardly? She's just like my late Nana, Mrs Bennet – the kindest soul in the world, a little dim, and not quite fair game for Grandad's sarcasm giggled at by his daughters and lost on his faithful and uncomprehending wife.

Now I readily concede – and many among you, I'm sure more knowledgeable than I on Jane Austen's work and the history of the subsequent industry of literary criticism around it, may know – that Harding's work, and that brilliantly memorable title, 'Regulated Hatred', has itself influenced and helped form the modern view of Jane Austen. To some extent, I'm sure, I can only remark that the subversive chord entwined within her work is easily recognisable and widely recognised, because Harding's view has taken root and spread.

But still I think that Harding was unfair: not unfair on Jane Austen, unfair on her readers. What makes him think that 'Gentlemen of an older generation' who 'spoke of their intention of re-reading her on their deathbeds' were conformist dupes of blunted sensibilities who thought that, enjoying her, they were enjoying something suitably sanctimonious and trite? What makes him think that refined gentlewomen, respectable ladies, vicars' wives, are simply missing what Jane Austen is all about? What makes him suppose – and how could anyone think Jane Austen supposed this of the readers she was writing for? – that the intelligent readership that has been gathering for a great deal more than a century around her work has not itself a taste for the subversive? Does it not itself, while living a life of respectable conventionality, nurse an occasional inner contempt for the conventional proprieties? Has never itself felt cramped and constrained by the civilities of polite society? Has not itself been gripped by sudden and fast-suppressed spasms of dislike for fools and contempt for the slaves of fashion?

Within every true Jane Austen fan is a bit of a rebel. Not, I concede, an individual who is likely to carry through his or her internal rebelliousness into a full-scale social revolution. But a person who has, from a corner of the room, quietly observed the follies and pretensions of a decorous social order – and gone along with them, and taken part in them, and never for a moment contemplated actually kicking over the traces – yet always thought that a lot of it was rather silly and some of it wasn't really very nice. Jane Austen is herself part of that

company, and it is for that company that she writes. This is not high class Chick Lit, and we know it.

So we are not, Dr Harding, misreading Jane Austen. We never did think her a fluffy writer. We see very well what lies beneath the ribbons and bows; we enjoy the ribbons and bows, but if ribbons and bows were all there were we'd content ourselves with Barbara Cartland. An appreciation for Jane Austen marks you out not as a ticking social time bomb, but not as a shallow slave to social nicety either; it marks you out as a polite, well-mannered, but internally sometimes caustic observer and paid-up participant in polite society. Contrast that with Evelyn Waugh – on the surface so much more abusive towards the world of which he writes, but beneath the surface cravenly admiring of it.

Which brings me to something I said at the outset I'd like to talk about. As an occasional writer of radio scripts myself, and a TV viewer and cinema-goer like most of my countrymen, I've rarely missed a Jane Austen adaptation. I've even attended theatre performances of *Pride and Prejudice*. I'm not sniffy about them – and I am. I'm most emphatically not sniffy about the idea that words-on-a-page can sometimes be translated into a film or a play that carries the spirit and meaning of the work into a new medium – even adding to it. Shakespeare would have adored cinema (*Richard III*). Dickens both loses and gains on screen or stage (*Great Expectations*). Any author whose genius lies in dialogue, or characterisation, or plots, or the pictures they paint in words, or the atmospheres they conjure up, should have no fear – and their readers should have no fear – of screen adaptations. Like George Eliot, Jane Austen's genius lies in all these things. And so, in *Sense and Sensibility* and in *Pride and Prejudice*, that delicacy of atmosphere, irony of situation, rich characterisation, engaging plot, dialogue as sharp and snappy as it is decorous, and those marvellous wide-screen pictures of an England gone by, all spring back to life: sometimes a picture more immediate than from words alone our poor imaginations can supply.

Nor do I sneer at costume drama. I love costume drama. Heavens above, what people wore, how people looked, how they moved – every flutter of an eyelash or tiny, contemptuous twitching of an upper lip, every ribbon and bow – matters in a Jane Austen novel. Nobody should think high quality BBC costume drama is alien to Jane's purposes. She would have loved it – though often enough her gaze would have been directed at the viewers rather than the viewed.

But there *is* something Jane Austen and George Eliot do that the stage or screen cannot, and both women do it superlatively: authorial comment. From Jane Austen's scene we are from time to time taken gently aside by the author herself, taken into her confidence, and *briefed*, not just on the developing plot, but on what we are to make of it. To me, these are among our most precious moments in Jane Austen's company: the 'superlatively stupid' card table at Rosings, at which 'Scarcely a syllable was uttered that did not relate to the game, except when Mrs. Jenkinson expressed her fears of Miss De Bourgh's being too hot or too cold, or having too much or too little light'; and Lady Catherine speaking at the other table, 'stating the mistakes of the others, or relating some anecdote of herself', while

‘Mr. Collins was employed in agreeing to every thing her Ladyship said, thanking her for every fish he won, and apologising if he thought he won too many’, and while Sir William Lucas, who ‘did not say much’, was ‘storing his memory with anecdotes and noble names’,⁶ or at the conclusion of *Mansfield Park*:

I purposely abstain from dates on this occasion, that every one may be at liberty to fix their own, aware that the cure of unconquerable passions, and the transfer of unchanging attachments, must vary much as to time in different people. – I only intreat every body to believe that exactly at the time when it was quite natural that it should be so, and not a week earlier, Edmund did cease to care about Miss Crawford, and became as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire.⁷

Bleak!

Now, perhaps *some* of the superlative stupidity of the Rosings card table can probably be conveyed in film, by simply showing it, but not the delicious disdain of the commentary. And how would you translate that bleak dispatch of the impermanence of human attraction in any other way than by projecting the words onto the screen? In which case, why not buy the book?

So here is my dilemma – and, I bet, yours too – on the on-screen Jane Austen industry. It attracts new admirers. It invites a new audience into her books themselves. It can conjure up marvellously two thirds of what Jane Austen herself is aiming to do. But the missing bit – her sometimes affectionate, sometimes melancholy, usually resigned, frequently tart, and just occasionally bleak, contemptuous or bitter reflections on the human condition – addressed to us readers directly in her books – all ends up on the cutting room floor because, as the old cry goes in television (and how I hate it) ‘there’s no pictures to go with it’.

And it is here that we find what D.W. Harding vividly, perhaps exaggeratedly, but I think perceptively called ‘Regulated Hatred’. And no, Dr Harding, it hasn’t gone above our heads.

Notes

- 1 D.W. Harding, *Regulated Hatred and Other Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. Monica Lawlor (London, 1998), p. 5.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 *Regulated Hatred*, p. 6.
- 4 *P&P*, vol. III, ch. 15.
- 5 See *NA*, vol. II, ch. 9.
- 6 *P&P*, vol. II, ch. 6.
- 7 *MP*, vol. III, ch. 17.

**Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31st December 2009
for
The Jane Austen Society**

The Jane Austen Society

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2009. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number
1040613

Principal address
c/o Mrs Maureen Stiller
9 Nicola Close
South Croydon
Surrey
CR2 6NA

Trustees

Richard Knight	President	
Patrick Stokes	Chairman	- resigned 18.7.09
David Selwyn	Chairman	
Maureen Stiller	Honorary Secretary	
Jill Williams	Honorary Treasurer	- resigned 18.7.09
Fiona Ainsworth	Minutes Secretary	
Tony Corley		
Catharine Freeman		- resigned 18.7.09
Clare Graham		
Marilyn Joice		
Deirdre Le Faye		
Elizabeth Proudman	Vice Chairman	- resigned 18.7.09
Kathryn Sutherland		- resigned 24.9.09
Janet Todd		
Lesley Wilson		
Sharron Bassett		- appointed 18.7.09
Anthony Finney		- appointed 18.7.09
Bruce Johnstone	Honorary Treasurer	- appointed 18.7.09

Independent Examiner

Mrs C A Stephens FCA
Sheen Stickland LLP
Chartered Accountants
4 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BU

Bankers

Lloyds TSB Bank plc
40 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BQ

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Jane Austen Society is governed by the Constitution adopted on 16th July 1994 as amended on 26th July 2003.

The Jane Austen Society

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational structure

The society is administered by the executive committee, which in accordance with the constitution consists of not less than 10 nor more than 17 members. The members of the committee are the officers of the charity and between 6 and 13 elected members.

All members of the executive committee (including the officers) are elected by postal ballot of the members of the society for a period of five years and are then eligible for re-election. The executive committee in addition may appoint up to four co-opted members.

On appointment trustees are given information on the role of a trustee and Charity Law.

The committee met three times during the year, and in addition a joint meeting was held with representatives of the branches and groups.

A Sub-committee of four members of the executive committee was formed during the year ended 31st December 2007 to deal with the processes relating to the publications of the society. The committee meets as and when required.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The principal objective of the Society is as follows:

To promote the advancement of education for the public benefit of the life and works of Jane Austen and the Austen family.

The objective is primarily achieved by the production of publications relating to the life and works of Jane Austen, through education and by contributions to academic debate regarding Jane Austen, her works and family.

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commissioners general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives of the Society and in planning future activities. In particular the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

The Society, where appropriate, may seek to preserve artefacts relating to Jane Austen, either by purchase or by contributions towards expenses. In particular the society may contribute to projects at Jane Austen's House in Chawton which is in the care of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

The Society's objectives for the year were to build on the progress made in previous years and to raise the profile of the Society by the production of new publications.

The Society also hoped to be able to increase its activities in the field of education by the granting of bursaries towards expenses incurred in the study of Jane Austen, her works, family, life and times.

The Jane Austen Society

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009**

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

The Society produced or reprinted one publication in the year, "Jane Austen and Tonbridge". A successful one day seminar was held on the 14th November 2009 at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge under the chairmanship of Professor Janet Todd.

During the year grants totalling £6,250 were made. Of this total £5,000 was paid to the Jane Austen Memorial Trust towards development work at the Chawton Cottage. £1,200 was donated to the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Tonbridge for the provision of two display cases for Austen Memorabilia.

No applications were received for grants from the educational fund during the year.

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 5 of these financial statements.

There was a deficit of income over expenditure on the general fund of £7,628 in the year (2008 - excess of £5,600). There was a decrease in overall income of £12,040, mainly due to decreased sales of publications of £2,411 and a decrease in income from events of £17,787. A refund of £2,000 has been received from HM Revenue and Customs since 31st December 2009 and is treated as a debtor in these accounts. This represents the tax recoverable on donations made under Gift Aid for the year ended 31st December 2009.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The committee's aims in the future are to continue to promote the activities of the Society, by the production of publications, the organisation of conferences and any other activities which they consider appropriate.

RESERVES

The Society's policy regarding reserves is detailed in note 1 on page 8 of these accounts. The committee consider, on the basis of current information available, that these funds are adequate to meet their known future commitments.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD :



David Selwyn - Trustee

Date: 10.6.10

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The Jane Austen Society**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2009 set out on pages five to eleven.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act)) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statements below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mrs C A Stephens FCA
Sheen Stickland LLP
Chartered Accountants
4 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BU

Date: 16th June 2010

The Jane Austen Society

Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

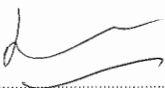
	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2009 Total funds £	2008 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income		27,525	-	27,525	22,762
Activities for generating funds	2	27,532	-	27,532	39,068
Investment income	3	3,590	-	3,590	8,857
Total incoming resources		<u>58,647</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>58,647</u>	<u>70,687</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of generating funds					
Costs of fundraising activities		8,962	-	8,962	25,978
Charitable activities	4	54,548	-	54,548	36,490
Governance costs	6	2,765	-	2,765	2,619
Total resources expended		<u>66,275</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>66,275</u>	<u>65,087</u>
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES					
		(7,628)	-	(7,628)	5,600
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		242,524	1,003	243,527	237,927
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>234,896</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>235,899</u>	<u>243,527</u>
CONTINUING OPERATIONS					
All the activities of the society are classed as continuing.					

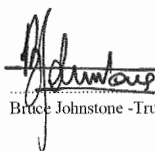
The Jane Austen Society

Balance Sheet
At 31st December 2009

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2009 Total funds £	2008 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	104	-	104	138
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	9	9,305	-	9,305	13,576
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	10	6,838	-	6,838	19,898
Cash at bank and in hand		221,003	1,003	222,006	212,350
		<u>237,146</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>238,149</u>	<u>245,824</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	11	(2,354)	-	(2,354)	(2,435)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>234,792</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>235,795</u>	<u>243,389</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>234,896</u>	<u>1,003</u>	<u>235,899</u>	<u>243,527</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>234,896</u></u>	<u><u>1,003</u></u>	<u><u>235,899</u></u>	<u><u>243,527</u></u>
FUNDS	12				
Unrestricted funds				234,896	242,524
Restricted funds				1,003	1,003
TOTAL FUNDS				<u><u>235,899</u></u>	<u><u>243,527</u></u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 8.6.10 and were signed on its behalf by:


David Selwyn -Trustee


Bruce Johnstone -Trustee

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, the Charities Act 1993 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Annual subscriptions are treated as income of the year in which they are received.

Life membership subscriptions are transferred to the general fund by equal instalments over a ten year period.

Donations and Legacies for the general activities of the Society are treated as income of the general fund in the period in which they are received

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures, fittings and equipment	-25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	-25% on reducing balance

Individual fixed assets costing £250 or more are capitalised at cost.

Stocks

Purchases of publications for resale are written off in equal instalments over a period of five years. Stocks therefore represent the unamortised portion of the last four years purchases.

Stocks held at branches of publications purchased direct from suppliers by those branches are not shown in the accounts.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted Fund is a fund of which the executive committee of the Society has unrestricted authority to spend the income and the capital to further the objectives of the Jane Austen Society.

Designated Funds represent unrestricted funds earmarked for particular purposes by the executive committee of the Society in the exercise of its discretionary powers.

Restricted Funds are funds which are subject to a restriction as to their use.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Reserves

The balance of the general fund represents approximately eighteen month's expenditure which the committee consider to be appropriate in the circumstances.

£120,000 of the legacies received in the years ended 31st December 2003 and 31st December 2004 was transferred to a designated fund. It was originally intended that the income from this fund would be used to provide travel bursaries to those wishing to carry out studies in furtherance of the charitable objects of the society. It has now been decided by the committee that this fund should be re-designated to cover a wider range of educational activities.

Branches

Branches of the society are defined in charity law as an integral part of the Society and as such enjoy various privileges and responsibilities in regard to the Society. In particular a branch can call upon the Society for financial support and is covered by the public liability insurance of the Society. The financial results of the branches are incorporated into the Society's statement of financial activities and the assets and liabilities of branches are included in the Society's balance sheet.

A group has no connection in law with The Jane Austen Society, and the financial activities of groups are not reflected in these accounts.

Details of activities of the branches are shown in note 15 to the accounts.

The members of the Hampshire branch decided that with effect from 1st January 2008, the status of the branch would change to that of a group. The assets and liabilities of the Hampshire branch at that date were transferred to the new Hampshire group.

2. ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS

	2009	2008
	£	£
Sales of publications	1,699	4,110
Advertising and distribution	120	196
Income from events	3,108	20,895
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	2,459	1,995
Income of branches	20,146	11,872
	<u>27,532</u>	<u>39,068</u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2009	2008
	£	£
Bank interest receivable	<u>3,590</u>	<u>8,857</u>

4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct costs	Grant funding of activities (See note 5)	Totals
	£	£	£
Charitable activities	<u>48,298</u>	<u>6,250</u>	<u>54,548</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

5. GRANTS PAYABLE

	2009	2008
	£	£
Charitable activities	6,250	-

Grants were made to three organisations during the year

6. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2009	2008
	£	£
Committee travelling expenses	1,590	1,699
Independent examiner's fee	1,175	920
	2,765	2,619

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2009 nor for the year ended 31st December 2008.

Trustees' Expenses

During the year a total of £1,550 was reimbursed to eight trustees in respect of travelling and other expenses (2008 - £1,177).

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1st January 2009 and 31st December 2009	750	323	1,073
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st January 2009	617	318	935
Charge for year	33	1	34
At 31st December 2009	650	319	969
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st December 2009	100	4	104
At 31st December 2008	133	5	138

The society was given mementoes of Jane Austen, articles of jewellery etc. which are maintained on public display at Jane Austen's House, Chawton. These items are recorded in the accounts at nil cost to the society. In the opinion of the trustees it would not be practicable to assign a value to these items.

Items of Jane Austen memorabilia purchased through the acquisition fund are charged to the fund in the year of purchase. As at 31st December 2009 no such acquisitions had been made.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

9. STOCKS

	2009	2008
	£	£
Stocks	9,305	13,576

10. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2009	2008
	£	£
Other debtors	5,049	14,989
Prepayments	1,789	4,909
	6,838	19,898

11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2009	2008
	£	£
Other creditors	1,179	1,515
Accruals and deferred income	1,175	920
	2,354	2,435

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.09 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.12.09 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	105,477	(8,528)	1,283	98,232
Life membership fund	11,047	900	(1,283)	10,664
Education fund	126,000	-	-	126,000
	242,524	(7,628)	-	234,896
Restricted funds				
Acquisition fund	1,000	-	-	1,000
Alwin Austen memorial fund	3	-	-	3
	1,003	-	-	1,003
TOTAL FUNDS	243,527	(7,628)	-	235,899

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	57,747	(66,275)	(8,528)
Life membership fund	900	-	900
	<u>58,647</u>	<u>(66,275)</u>	<u>(7,628)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>58,647</u></u>	<u><u>(66,275)</u></u>	<u><u>(7,628)</u></u>

13. BRANCHES

	Midlands £	Kent £	Northern £	Scotland £	Total £
Income					
Subscriptions	1,026	1,304	973	728	4,031
Income from events	7,052	2,380	1,938	2,385	13,755
Sales of publications	547	199	265	876	1,887
Donations	-	43	12	349	404
Interest	9		59	1	69
	<u>8,634</u>	<u>3,926</u>	<u>3,247</u>	<u>4,339</u>	<u>20,146</u>
Expenses					
Expenses of events	7,243	1,993	2,130	2,061	13,427
Cost of publications	47	1,019	531	829	2,426
Donations	-	200	200	186	586
Administration expenses	798	168	240	724	1,930
	<u>8,088</u>	<u>3,380</u>	<u>3,101</u>	<u>3,800</u>	<u>18,369</u>
Branch Surplus/(Deficit)	<u><u>546</u></u>	<u><u>546</u></u>	<u><u>146</u></u>	<u><u>539</u></u>	<u><u>1,777</u></u>

The Jane Austen Society

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2009**

	2009 £	2008 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary income		
Annual subscriptions received	16,684	14,051
Life membership fund income	900	250
Gift Aid tax recovered	9,841	6,855
Sundry donations and receipts	100	1,606
	<u>27,525</u>	<u>22,762</u>
Activities for generating funds		
Sales of publications	1,699	4,110
Advertising and distribution	120	196
Income from events	3,108	20,895
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	2,459	1,995
Income of branches	20,146	11,872
	<u>27,532</u>	<u>39,068</u>
Investment income		
Bank interest receivable	3,590	8,857
	<u>3,590</u>	<u>8,857</u>
Total incoming resources	<u>58,647</u>	<u>70,687</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Costs of fundraising activities		
Purchases of publications (after stock adjustment)	5,211	5,579
Expenses of events	2,843	19,011
Events insurance	908	1,388
	<u>8,962</u>	<u>25,978</u>
Charitable activities		
Printing and stationery	740	947
Postage and telephone	857	160
Storage	951	79
Subscriptions	169	169
Newsletter	5,842	5,200
Members' database	1,507	1,694
Publicity	38	-
Annual General Meeting	10,522	7,810
Annual Report	8,356	7,241
Assets transferred to Hampshire Group	-	910
Expenses of branches	18,369	11,326
Depreciation of fixtures, fittings and equipment	33	44
Depreciation of office equipment	1	2
Bank charges	913	908
Grants to institutions	6,250	-
	<u>54,548</u>	<u>36,490</u>

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Fanny Knight's Diaries: Jane Austen through her niece's eyes, by Deirdre Le Faye. From diaries kept by Fanny Knight from the age of 11, it is possible to gain a vivid picture of the happy life of her family in their Kentish neighbourhood, and also biographical information regarding Jane Austen which is not recorded anywhere else. Illustrated (2000).

Jane Austen's Family and Tonbridge, by Margaret Wilson

This book explores the history of Jane Austen's Kentish ancestors and cousins as well as being informative about acquaintances who also had a Tonbridge connection. Illustrated. (Published in association with the Kent Branch, 2001.)

Jane Austen and Lyme Regis, by Maggie Lane

An authoritative account of the places associated with Jane Austen's two visits to Dorset in 1803 and 1804 and the famous scenes in *Persuasion*. Includes a brief history of the resort, quotations from later writers, many illustrations and a map (2003).

The Complete Poems of James Austen, edited with an introduction and notes by David Selwyn. This volume provides for the first time an opportunity to enjoy all the poetry written by Jane Austen's eldest brother - the amusing prologues and epilogues to the Steventon theatricals, the affectionate verses for his children and the lyrical descriptions of the Hampshire landscape he loved so much (2003).

Fugitive Pieces: the Poetry of James Edward Austen-Leigh, Jane Austen's nephew and biographer, edited with an introduction and notes by David Selwyn. The poems, many of them written in his youth, are interspersed with charming silhouette pictures cut by James Edward Austen-Leigh himself (2006).

The Letters of Mrs Lefroy: Jane Austen's Beloved Friend, edited by Helen Lefroy and Gavin Turner. Written 1800-1804, these letters constitute a remarkable historical resource, combining details of domestic life and country society in North Hampshire with commentary on events on the wider national stage at a time of great anxiety in Britain. Illustrated (2007).

Jane Austen's Steventon, by Deirdre Le Faye. A short history of the parish of Steventon, where Jane Austen lived for the greater part of her life, and which has now become famous as her birthplace. Illustrated (2007).

The Society's publications

The *Collected Reports* are an important record of the Society's history since its inception, and of original research over the years. Subjects covered in the annual address at the AGM range widely and include all aspects of the life and work of Jane Austen.

Collected Reports I, 1949-1965

Collected Reports II, 1966-1975

Collected Reports III, 1976-1985

Collected Reports IV, 1986-1995

Collected Reports V, 1996-2000 (includes Index from 1949)

Collected Reports VI, 2001-2005 (includes Index 2001-2005)

My Aunt Jane Austen: a memoir, by Caroline Austen

Unique childhood memories of Mrs Austen, Jane and Cassandra at Chawton (1952, reprinted 1991).

Jane Austen in Bath, by Jean Freeman

First published in 1969, the text has been completely revised by Gavin Turner, with new illustrations (2002).

Reminiscences of Jane Austen's niece Caroline Austen, ed. Deirdre Le Faye

Caroline's own memoirs, written in the 1870s, look back to Regency Hampshire, to the Steventon district where her aunt Jane Austen had grown up, and where the neighbours mentioned in Jane's letters lived on into Caroline's girlhood. Illustrated (1986, reprinted 2004).

Jane Austen: Collected Poems and Verse of the Austen family, ed. David Selwyn

All poems known to have been written by Jane Austen are printed here, and all those by her mother, a clever and witty versifier, as well as charades, poems and riddles by other members of the family circle. Fully annotated. (Published in association with Carcanet Press, 1996.)

Godmersham Park, Kent - before, during, and since Jane Austen's day, by Nigel Nicolson.

With his discerning and knowledgeable eye the author describes this elegant country house, once the home of Jane Austen's brother Edward. He comments on references in Jane Austen's letters to her visits. Here she acquired an understanding of social life in large houses, used so effectively in her novels. Illustrated (1996).

Jane Austen: A Celebration, ed. Maggie Lane and David Selwyn, with a foreword by HRH the Prince of Wales.

A collection of views of Jane Austen from distinguished people in all walks of life; many of the pieces have been specially written for the book. (Published in association with Chawton House Library and Carcanet Press, 2000.)

Continued on inside back cover